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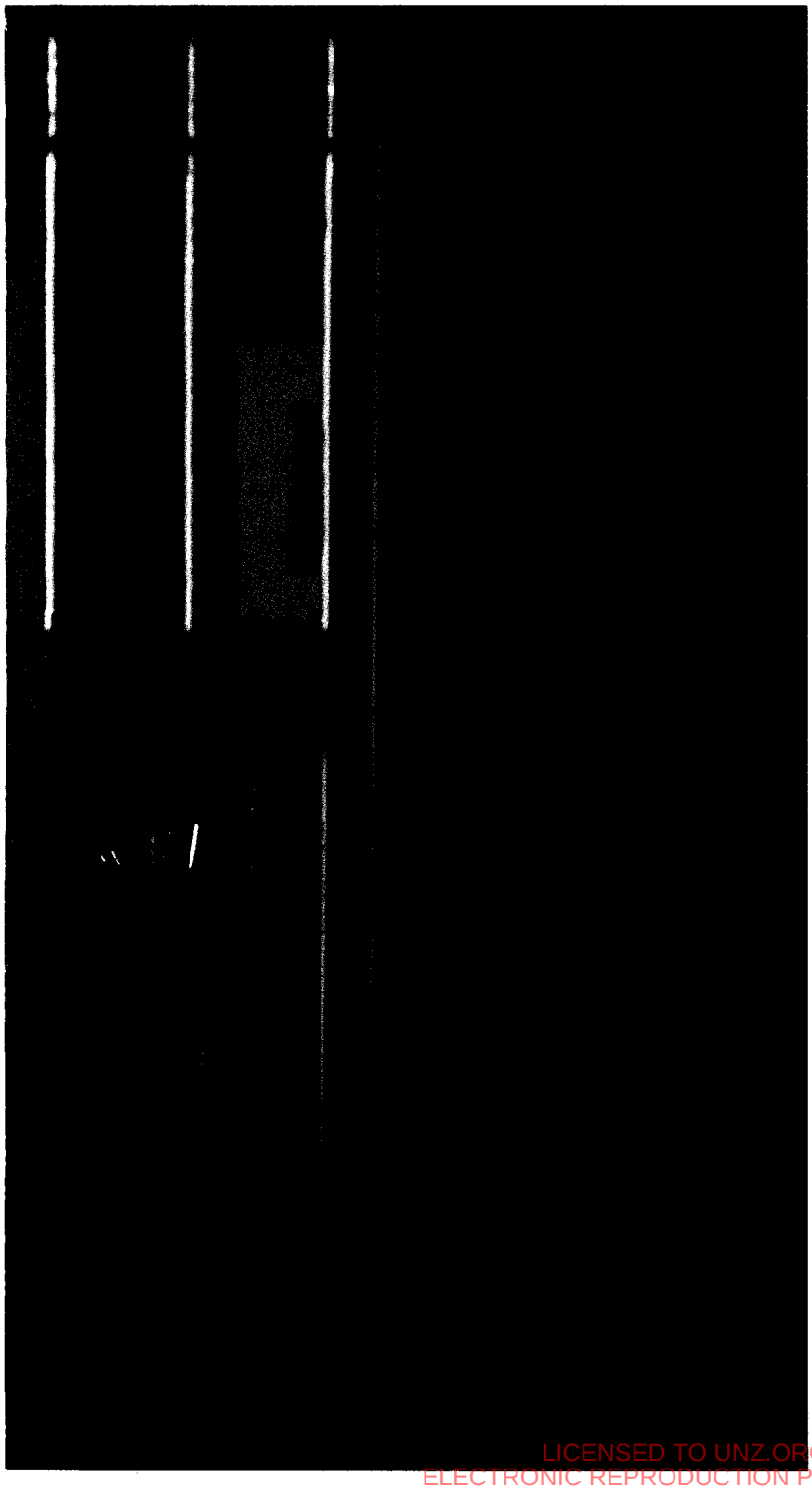

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FROM WASHINGTON

Where are they now?

"Democrats buy, Republicans rent" used to be the maxim of the Washington real estate market—meaning that Republicans served their terms in Washington and then went back to the real America, whereas Democrats, with their commitment to Big Government, put down roots in the capital. Everyone knows that hasn't been true for decades, but conservatives still make a big noise about their alleged distaste for Washington: its isolation, its elitism, its reliance on the public sector and estrangement from the productive economy.

No politician played on this kind of anti-Washington imagery more successfully than Ronald Reagan (although Jimmy Carter tried). In Reagan's own mind, his administration was probably some Jeffersonian dreamworld of hardy yeomen who had reluctantly set down their plows for a brief term of government service before returning to the land that had nurtured their fine American values.

In fact, the Reaganites are already just another layer of sediment in the geology of Washington. At law firms, lobbying outfits, think tanks, and expense-account restaurants, the Reagan people have sprinkled down and settled in on top of the Carterites, Nixonites, New Frontier and Great Society types, and so on back to a few remaining New Dealers.

Do you doubt it? Let's put the proposition to a test. In May 1985—the high noon of Reaganism, after the triumphal re-election, before Iran-contra—*National Journal* published its quadrennial special issue purporting to identify the top "Decision Makers" of the Reagan administration. From this source, a crack NEW REPUBLIC research team (Dan Gross) compiled a roster of 102 top officials: all those listed from the White House, the National Security Council, the Office of Management and Budget, etc., plus the 13 Cabinet officers and heads of 34 executive, independent, and regulatory agencies. How many of them were in Washington before morning arrived in America with Reagan in 1980? How many are still here now?

Four of the 102 have died, leaving 98 in our semiscientific sample. Of these, by my count, 40 were in Washington before the Reagan administration and are still here; 9 were in Washington beforehand but are now gone; 23 came from elsewhere and stuck around; and 26 came from elsewhere and left.

Instant analysis: exactly half (49) of Reagan's top appointees at the zenith of his reign came from the permanent Washington establishment, while half were hardy yeomen tilling the soil at places like Merrill Lynch in New York (staff chief Donald Regan . . . still here). Of the Washingtonians, I spotted only one—Communications Director Patrick Buchanan—who is a genuine native. The rest were capital arrivistes at some point in their careers.

Of the ones who came from outside Washington, slightly more left after the party (26) than stuck around (23). But in all, 63 of our Reaganites are still in Washington, while only 35 have made new lives or resumed old ones outside the Beltway. That's almost two-to-one.

Sixteen of those who are still in Washington are working for the Bush administration, including the president himself. So they are still in public service. That's a mitigating factor for those who see the Washington Problem as one of a leech culture on the rest of the country, but not for those who see the Washington Problem as one of a permanent governing class.

On the other hand, many of those who have left Washington physically haven't really left it spiritually. Five are ambassadors. At least one is back in his home state running for Congress in order to get back here. Those who left did not necessarily go back where they came from. Several—such as David Stockman, a representative from western Michigan before becoming budget director—have moved on to New York. Some might see that kind of movement as a natural progression of elitism, rather than a reassuring populist ebb and flow.

Few of the Reagan 98, whether in Washington or elsewhere, have returned to anything Thomas Jefferson would recognize as the private sector. They are regulatory lawyers or fellows somewhere or in "government affairs" at large corporations. An astonishing number now identify themselves as "consultant," a term that covers a variety of sins. Secretary of Agriculture John Block actually *was* a farmer in Illinois when he was appointed in 1981. Now he is president of the National American Wholesale Grocers' Association in Falls Church, Virginia (that's inside the Beltway).

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From Robert Jay Lifton, author of *The Nazi Doctors*

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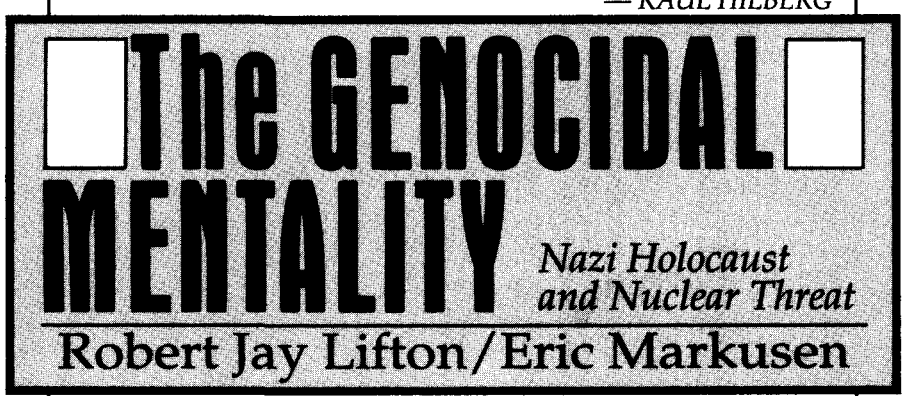

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CORRESPONDENCE

Drug stories

To the editors:

If it's Burke's little platoons that Charles Murray wants ("How to Win the War on Drugs," May 21), I invite him to go out and see them already in operation across the country. Over the past several months, I've visited dozens of poor neighborhoods once ravaged by drugs but now calmer, safer places because the residents got fed up, cleaned up their buildings, and worked with the police to restore some civility to the streets. Perhaps other neighborhoods would be better off with a little less government regulation. But before we get there, we need to control the chaos that, in some communities, makes the kind of private decision-making Murray favors virtually impossible.

At the very least, that requires law enforcement. The goal here is not to increase the number of arrests but to provide an essential level of protection from the street thugs. Getting drugs out of a neighborhood also requires drug treatment—conspicuously absent in Murray's plan. Treatment doesn't always work, of course, but it is often the most cost-effective method of breaking the destructive cycle of habitual drug use.

This prescription won't fit with Murray's hawk-and-dove typology of the drug war. But it does fit with what is desperately needed in neighborhoods drowning in drugs. Until we provide the residents of these neighborhoods with some basic security and a way out of drug dependency, I suspect that Murray's vision of school vouchers and free market housing—both good ideas—will benefit only those who are not yet the victims of drugs.

WILLIAM J. BENNETT
Washington, D.C.

The writer is director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

To the editors:

Serious as the drug problem is, I can't see attaining a drug-free society at the expense of the anti-segregationist values that drove the social policies of the '60s. Charles Murray is right to say that reversing social disintegration lies in fostering stronger communities. He is wrong in believing that the process will succeed in individual (segregated) neighborhoods.

Disadvantaged communities are subject to high stress not because their inhabitants have a misplaced sense of how to have "fun" but because our culture at large has encouraged the perception that virtue is not enough. For the black male, it takes more than intelligence and hard work to succeed. Worse, as demonstrated by Ivan Boesky, Michael Milken, and too many of our political leaders, a lack of moral scruples is a distinct advantage. Why should drug dealers be any different?

How about establishing sweat-equity housing programs for the poor in middle-class suburbs, which would reward hard work, ease dislocations in the urban job market, and consequently provide families with the opportunity to become self-sufficient? How about providing schools with the resources to organize after-hours activities, easing the strain on families that can't afford to have a parent at home? Combating the root causes of the drug epidemic requires establishing a larger sense of community. Let's not allow fear to open the back door to prejudice.

BRIAN BALKE
Livermore, California

Not a free country

To the editors:

Morton Kondracke perpetuates an annoying cold war habit ("Saddamnation," May 7). After compiling an impressive list of atrocities that proves Saddam Hussein is a dictator in the Stalin mode, Kondracke notes that "Iraq has the second-largest oil reserves in the *free world*" (my emphasis). Apparently the only qualification needed for admission to the "free world" is being non-Communist. With Eastern Europe changing daily and even Nicaragua exercising its democratic prerogative, isn't it time commentators recognize that a totalitarian government is a totalitarian government, period?

CHRISTOPHER ABBOT
Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts

Blue genes

To the editors:

Robert Bazell ("The Drink Link," May 7) alleges that genetic studies are and will likely remain unable to provide better methods for treatment or prevention of alcoholism. This argument is almost wholly without merit. Bazell states that the difficulty of diagnosing alcoholism makes it impossible to characterize genetically, but several experiments with both animal models and human alcoholics suggest that linkage of alcoholism to several genes with small effects is a strong possibility. It's wrong to conclude that all genetic research on alcoholism is

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SHOULD THE UNITED STATES LEAVE SOUTH KOREA?

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

JUNE 11, 1990

SAY THE RIGHT THING

Every U.S.-Soviet summit ends up having a theme, and every American president sitting down with his Soviet counterpart clutches a list of what are known in the trade as talking points. For the upcoming Washington summit, George Bush should try to make the theme, "Mikhail Sergeyevich, Do the Right Thing." And herewith, for his edification, some talking points.

Bush needs to tell Gorbachev to do the right thing because the Soviet leader has not of late been following Spike Lee's advice. On the contrary, from the Baltics to Germany to economics to civil liberties to conventional force reductions and even strategic weaponry, the Soviet president has mostly been doing the wrong thing—wrong for us, wrong for the people affected (including the Soviet people), and, ultimately, wrong for Mikhail Gorbachev. It's fine for Bush to want to "help Gorbachev" at the summit. But let him do so not by humoring his visitor and giving him the benefit of every doubt, but by pushing him, prodding him, persuading him, and giving him concrete reasons to do what's right. Specifically, Bush should tell Gorbachev:

(1) Let the Baltics go. To their limited credit, Bush and Secretary of State James Baker proved on May 16 that they understand the principle that pressure works. On that day Baker implied to Moscow that a new-minted U.S.-Soviet trade agreement might not be signed at the summit if the Soviet authorities persisted in refusing to negotiate with Lithuania. In response, Gorbachev met with the Lithuanian prime minister, Kazmiera Prunskiene, for two hours. This outwardly eased tensions (enough to suit Washington, anyway), but it fell far short of a commitment to good-faith negotiation leading toward Baltic self-determination.

At the meeting, in fact, Gorbachev continued to demand that Lithuania rescind its March 11 declaration of independence and submit to his elaborate and lengthy "constitutional" process for secession from the Soviet Union. Not only did he not lift economic sanctions against Lithuania; he told Prunskiene that he would tighten them if Lithuania did not "behave intelligently." What's more, after encouraging Latvia and Estonia to think they would be dealt with fairly if they pursued a more moderate course toward independence, Gorbachev denounced them, too, and inspired Soviet military officers in Riga and Russian nationals in Tallinn to intimidate Latvians and Estonians by staging violent provocations in the streets.

Bush should make Gorbachev understand that the United States simply cannot go forward with liberalized trade with the Soviet Union while he is bullying the Balts. This need not be phrased as a threat; it's a simple political reality. For the Jackson-Vanik law to be waived and the Soviets granted most-favored-nation trade status requires an act of Congress. That's not going to happen (in spite of the improved Soviet emigration policy for Jews) without more progress in the Baltics.

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Moreover, Bush should remind Gorbachev, publicly and privately, of something he failed to make clear at the outset of the Baltic unrest: that the United States has never recognized the legitimacy of Soviet rule in the Baltics. He should remind Gorbachev that by denouncing as illegal and immoral the Stalin-Hitler pact under which the Baltics were forcibly annexed, the Soviet government itself has acknowledged that the Baltics are a special case. Beyond this, Bush should say, "Friend, it's in your own interest to let these people go. By allowing your Eastern European neighbors to find their way to freedom, you've succeeded magnificently in erasing the West's image of your country as our enemy. But freedom is indivisible. If you crush Lithuania's—or anyone's—you'll never build your own."

To back up his argument, Bush might even slip Gorbachev a copy of an article in the May 20 *Washington Post* by Martha Olcott, a professor of political science at Colgate, demonstrating how the best future for the Soviet Union lies in replacing the present empire held together by force with a free association in which some republics go independent, others stick with Russia, and others opt for confederation. Olcott observes that Gorbachev is wasting money, energy, and political capital (and in some places, blood) fighting against popular nationalist movements when all those resources are needed to modernize Russia and other republics that want to maintain ties with it.

(2) Quit stalling on troop withdrawals from Europe. After allowing Eastern Europe to go democratic and announcing unilateral Soviet troop cuts, Gorbachev has begun to balk at further reductions to fulfill an agreement in principle to get his forces in Eastern Europe down to 195,000 (from 565,000). For reasons that are not entirely clear, the Soviets have simply stopped working on a Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) pact that the United States hoped to sign this year. Meanwhile, Gorbachev still urgently wants a thirty-five-nation summit to be held this year to establish the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) as a major forum for European political, economic, and military discussions. With the Warsaw Pact all but dead, the Soviet Union desires an institutional connection to Europe, the United States, and Canada.

Bush should make it clear: no CFE, no CSCE. Or to put it more diplomatically, a CSCE summit will be held when it's time to sign CFE, but not before. And if that is not enough, he ought to find some other linkages to apply. Until the Malta summit late last year, Bush placed a CFE pact at the top of its arms control agenda, ahead of a START treaty, on the grounds that nothing could make the peace more durable than putting an end to the Soviet conventional threat against Western Europe and to the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe. At Malta, Bush pushed START up to equal standing with CFE. Now the Soviets have pushed START ahead, and Bush is ready to sign a pact-in-principle at the Washington summit. But if the Soviets continue to block movement on CFE this year, Bush ought to consider delaying the final signing of the full START treaty.

What's blocking CFE? Soviet worries about Germany, mostly. Moscow is demanding that a treaty stipulate limits on German armaments, while the United States is justifiably refusing to single out its ally in a manner reminiscent of the imposed Versailles treaty after World War I. The NATO allies *are* ready to give all sorts of security assurances to the Soviets. Bush has promised major reductions of nuclear weapons in Europe. NATO says it will reduce overall force levels, without formally assigning a level to Germany. Informally, the Germans are promising to cut down their army (already just a tenth the size of the Soviet army) from the present 340,000 to 150,000 by the year 2000; to convert the East German army of 150,000 into a border guard; to keep NATO forces out of East Germany; and to allow Soviet troops to remain for a decent interval. (The Soviets have halted unilateral withdrawals from Eastern Europe because they have no housing for the troops back home.) The West Germans are even picking up the costs of housing Soviet troops, formerly paid by East Germany, and probably will pay the added extortion money the Soviets are planning to charge for the facilities they leave behind. Bush should tell Gorbachev: ultimately, you'll have to trust Germany not to convert itself into a military menace anyway, so why not do it now? And you are more likely to enjoy German goodwill (and receive its economic help) if you cease trying to make it a pariah. So get on with CFE, in your own interest. And by the way, you've done enough to wreck Eastern Europe's economies already; don't charge them a fee for getting your occupation troops off their property.

(3) Quit fighting Germany's membership in NATO. This too is in Russia's interest, something Gorbachev and other top Soviet officials keep indicating in private that they understand. Yet in public they keep demanding a neutral Germany or a Germany that's part of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact, which would also be a kind of neutrality (in that neither side would fully trust Germany with its military secrets).

Some Soviets undoubtedly feel that German unification is humiliation enough, and Germany in NATO is too much. But with some prodding, the Soviet Union will understand that its security will be far better served by a Germany firmly tethered to the West than by a neutral, unmoored Germany rolling around the deck of Europe like a huge loose cannon—and making its own decisions about such questions as whether to go nuclear. Bush should tell Gorbachev: "Look, Germany is going to be in NATO whether you like it or not. You can complicate the process and make it rancorous, but you can't prevent it short of using force. So embrace it. Get the benefits. Make the Germans like you."

(4) Don't go halfway on economic reform. Poland, whose government has the confidence of its people, has taken a cold plunge into capitalism. Gorbachev, fearing he does not have popular support, is constantly proposing "gradual . . . transition" programs leading to a "regulated market economy." His latest proposal, an-

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nounced May 22, calls for doubling food prices immediately but retaining centralized control of the economy for five years. On May 20 he announced the creation of a private housing market, but building materials will be controlled by the state, and private developers will be subject to special taxes and profit regulations to prevent "speculation." Peasants can lease farmland but can't sell it, and collective farm managers decide which land can be leased. The top official in charge of agriculture is Yegor Ligachev, the leader of anti-reform forces in the Communist Party. Bush has no business forcing private enterprise on Gorbachev. He can just tell him: if you want foreign investment, you have to adopt a system in which investment is economically rational. Whatever advice you want, we'll give you.

(5) Quit building new nuclear missiles. The START agreement that Bush eagerly wants to sign reduces the number of warheads and launchers in each country's arsenal but does not prevent either side from modernizing its weapons. The Pentagon would like to spend zillions on rail-mobile MXs, Midgetmen, B-2 bombers, Trident submarines, and D-5 missiles, but Congress won't let most of it happen. The Soviet Union, though, is building up as though the cold war were still on. Last year, for example, the United States deployed twelve new ten-warhead MX intercontinental ballistic missiles in fixed silos and reached no national consensus on building any mobile missiles. The Soviets, though, deployed 140 new ICBMs of three types—a radically new version of the ten-warhead SS-18 in silos; the rail-mobile, ten-warhead SS-24, and the single-warhead SS-25. The Soviets are also spending precious resources building more submarine-based missiles and short-range nukes than we do.

What's all this for? It can't be for catch-up. The Soviets now have 10,100 warheads on intercontinental missiles, to 7,500 for the United States. Since the Soviets are unlikely ever to use the missiles, building them must be just a wasteful way of buying off the Soviet military. Bush should insist that this stuff stop, in the interest of both of our economies. Under START I, each country will go down to 6,000 warheads, but Bush ought to get a commitment from Gorbachev to reduce or eliminate multiple-warhead land-based missiles as part of START II.

(6) Pass a new emigration law, as you've repeatedly promised; quit letting officials arbitrarily bar the departure of refuseniks who have been waiting jobless for years, and establish direct flights from Moscow to Israel.

(7) End your aid to Fidel Castro ($15 billion a year), and spend the money at home.

(8) Glasnost is cool; keep it that way. After Gorbachev got booed on May Day—by what he described as a "rabble" bent on insurrection—legislation was introduced banning attacks on the Soviet president. The law got watered down in the Supreme Soviet—in fact, the parliamentarians added a provision protecting political criticisms of the president and his policies—but it's clear Gorbachev doesn't understand that freedom of speech is not always polite. Bush should tell him, "Relax. Booing the boss is what democracy is all about."

In suggesting this list of talking points, we're implicitly rejecting a model of Soviet politics that has been around since the days of Nikita Khrushchev. In its current form—as endorsed by Gorbachev-boosters from Bush and Baker on down—this model holds that too much U.S. pressure on Gorbachev might undermine him, that he's got enough problems with his economy and doesn't need independence struggles to boot, that the Soviet military and Communist reactionaries are leaning on him—and that, for all these reasons, we ought to go easy on him.

The truth is exactly the reverse. Thanks largely to his own efforts, Gorbachev operates in a domestic political context that is completely different from that of any previous Soviet leader. The Soviet Union now has genuine, if rudimentary, politics. Much of the struggle for power there now takes place in the open. And to the extent that Gorbachev faces right-wing opposition, he needs not American silence but countervailing—and public—American pressure to help him get the right things done. And the more he does the right things, the stronger he and the Soviet Union will be.

Despite the economic and ethnic catastrophes over which he presides, we think Gorbachev actually is in better political shape than many worriers imagine. He has shrewdly protected himself by substituting the state for the Communist Party as the ruling institution of the Soviet Union. A Khrushchev could be toppled from power by a sudden and secret vote of a dozen men in the Party Politburo, but Gorbachev has made himself immune from that kind of bloodless party coup. Because he refused to submit himself to a popular election, he lacks a popular mandate. But where are the mechanisms for his removal? For the next five years, he is ensconced in the presidency he created. He could be ousted, it would seem, only in one of two ways: he could be forced to resign after a prolonged and massive popular uprising; or he could be toppled in a bloody military coup that would necessarily be accompanied by mass repression and arrests. The former possibility is much more likely, but it would take long enough to develop that if it happened, it could not come entirely as a surprise. The latter possibility is harder to imagine—because the coup planners would be left dealing with the same set of intractable problems, but with even less political legitimacy and facing an even more sullen and restive population.

What this means for the summit is that Bush need not worry too much that American pressure on Gorbachev—especially pressure on him to do what he ought to be doing anyway—will somehow play into the hands of troglodytes or hard-liners. The ironic truth is that Gorbachev's greatest success—the creation of a more open political system in the Soviet Union—is what makes him vulnerable to pressure. Not only as a matter of interest but also as a matter of political morality, it is incumbent on the United States to apply such pressure.

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President Bush, unfortunately, is likely to plan this as a sympathy summit for Gorbachev, hoping to help him with the restive folks back home by signing lots of pieces of paper, doing lots of smiling, and arranging lots of opportunities for him to be televised wowing crowds of appreciative Americans in Washington, Minneapolis, and San Francisco. Image-making is fine for a few days or weeks, and the folks back home have no objection to TV pictures of success abroad. But when the pictures fade they want goods in the stores, an economy that works—and freedom. Bush should help them get it all.

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

Unlike love, hatred is usually requited. What is surprising about the news that an Israeli—aged twenty-one, pretending to be a soldier (the army had let him go because of his mental instability) and otherwise more than slightly crazed—took his own "revenge" on the Palestinians is that such an act of solitary madness was so long in coming. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of those increasingly rare struggles over which a new day is not dawning, over which peace and sweet reason is not breaking out. Political strife is becoming communal strife; and as Major General Natan Vilnai, the commander of Israeli forces in Gaza, told *The Washington Post*, "There is no doubt we have a grave problem here with the growing number of people who have a personal account to settle with us." Personal accounts are the nightmare of diplomats.

The massacre at Rishon le-Zion was an atrocity that sets the "peace process," such as it is, even further back. The deed chills us to the bone. But let us think coolly about, let us properly understand, the meaning of this shock. Surely one of the most striking facts about this conflict is that there has not been, over the years, anything remotely close to an "eye-for-an-eye" free-lance response by Israelis to the relentless, virtually daily violence of Palestinians. The racist violence of certain West Bank settlers was hardly an expression of mainstream sentiment in Israel; and it is regularly condemned from all sides of the political spectrum and punished by the courts. The world doesn't expect from Israelis what it accepts by now as routine behavior by their enemies—which may explain the editorial moralizing about the Travis Bickle of Rishon le-Zion. It would be nice, it would conform to the anti-Israeli bias, if his deed could be made to seem typical.

When was the last time you read in the prestige press an account of the ongoing nerve-fraying terror that Israelis have learned to endure as the price of living in their neighborhood? The intifada ebbs and swells, but Israelis always live by their nerves. We don't only mean the random knifings in the streets and the rockets from across the borders, or for that matter, the showerings of stones and Molotov cocktails on innocent civilians traveling the roads. About these latter victims, progressive opinion mutters something like, "They brought it upon themselves," assuming that the "they" are all settlers, rather than "good" Jews content to live in Tel Aviv on the Mediterranean coast. But what about the explosive devices planted every day by Palestinians in buses, parks, and other public places around the country? These are intended to kill. They are discovered by a public trained to check for bombs, whose children are raised on anti-terrorist skills like the ability to recognize "unaccompanied packages." Bombs that don't go off also don't make the papers.

The leaders of Israel have condemned in no uncertain terms this act against Palestinian workers. President Chaim Herzog called the killings "an abominable and criminal act" at which "every person in the entire nation will shudder." Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, a jingoist doing his best to prevent political compromise or diplomatic movement, called it "a shocking act of lunacy, the likes of which should not be allowed to transpire in our midst," and he meant it. Contrast this with the responses of the internationally accredited Palestinian leadership whenever a "deranged" Palestinian kills some Jews: Palestinian organizations compete for the "credit," the killer is lauded, and his deed is made legend. That is precisely what happened when a Palestinian forced a bus full of Israelis off the highway into a ravine, killing fourteen. And it's also what happened when an Israeli tour bus was ambushed in Egypt and sixteen of its passengers were slaughtered. It is completely cynical that Yasir Arafat should now call for a U.N. Security Council resolution condemning Israel for an act by an insane man that it has already itself condemned. Will the Bush administration use the occasion for another cheap show of churlishness toward Israel?

It was inevitable, of course, that the massacre at Rishon le-Zion would set the area aflame: recall that the intifada started in December 1987 as the reaction to a false rumor about a traffic accident in Gaza. In recent days blood has been spilled in the territories and in Israel. (The riots of Israel's Arabs were particularly ominous and should give pause even to Israelis who can live with a repression of the Palestinians. It should also give pause to the Palestinians.) In Jordan, too, a Palestinian vented his rage on a busload of French tourists in Amman. Palestinians riot in Jordan still.

Unfortunately for the Palestinians, rage is not politics. It is only catharsis. Of course, terror feeds not only on hate, but also on hopelessness. Hopelessness, say partisans of the Palestinian cause, is what leads Palestinians to terror: give them hope and they will turn to pragmatism in their own behalf. Now, it is not difficult to see the grounds for Palestinian hopelessness. They are many—and some of them are, in fact, Palestinian. Hopelessness depends on your aspirations. If the Palestinians will accept a political compromise, a complicated solution, less than they dream of but more than they have, it may still be diplomatically available. (No,

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we are not discounting the obstructionism of Shamir and the Likud; but they are only a part of the Israeli picture.) If they will accept only everything, however, then their hopelessness has no solution.

In Israel there is still the fear, quite realistic in our view, that the aspirations of the average Palestinian toward Israel remain quite maximalist. It is not to be confused with this madman's murderousness, but neither is it to be denied. Palestinian terror started long before Israel ruled the West Bank and Gaza, and there will still be Palestinian terror if and when the status of these areas is changed. There are plenty of good reasons for Israel to rid itself of its dominion over these territories. Unfortunately, many of these reasons may have nothing to do with the end of Palestinian terror.

The terror in Rishon le-Zion was also caused by hopelessness. This hopelessness is *not* easy to understand: the young man also seemed to think he had a "personal account" to "settle." He saw the might of Israel deployed in the territories, and it was not enough. He had aspirations for the Palestinians too, despicable ones. Even if he is not alone in his hatreds, however, his aspirations are not his society's. And yet his repulsive deed is a sign that the business of politics in the Middle East is growing still more urgent. The adjudication of justice and security in this hardened conflict is difficult enough without it being burdened with the task of medicating and mediating private and public demons.

NOTEBOOK

BLACK, WHITE, & GREEN #43: Like many artists, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Rauschenberg, Jim Dine, Eric Fischl, and Christo are unhappy with Jesse Helms's holy war against the National Endowment for the Arts. So it is perfectly natural for them to pool their resources in order to fund one of the North Carolina senator's Democratic challengers. The curiosity is which challenger they have decided to support. Instead of the former mayor of Charlotte, Harvey Gantt, who came in first in the Democratic primary on May 8 and who wants to leave the NEA alone, the artists have already donated some $60,000 to Michael Easley, who says he would *oppose* funding for Robert Mapplethorpe and other "obscene" art. The reason for choosing an antagonist over an ally is that Gantt is black and Easley white. A story by James Ledbetter in *The Village Voice* quotes Washington political consultant Bob Bedard, who organized the artists, as saying: "A black man can't win in North Carolina." This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when wealthy white liberals won't support one. Bedard even claims to have coached Easley on his position that the NEA shouldn't fund "obscene" art—a position his PAC was created in order to oppose. Talk about painting yourself into a corner!

SWINGIN' LOVERS:
"*Markers* is so worldly, witty, warm and wise, if it were a song it would be Rodgers and Hart." —Frank Sinatra, blurb, dust jacket of a new novel by Sidney Zion, front cover
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CHECK IT OUT:

McLIBRARIES

By Stephen Akey

—TNR, February 26

Stephen Akey
McLibraries

—*The Washington Post*, May 20

THE LAST VAUDEVILLIAN: Sammy Davis Jr., who died on May 16 at sixty-four, had a career that was an amazing panorama of the entire history of the American musical variety stage. He did all there was to do, often well. To see that flickering footage of the nine-year-old Davis, in bowler hat and cane, hoofing with the Will Mastin Trio is to flash back to the music-hall, minstrel-show diversions of the mid-nineteenth century. Davis danced, sang, acted, wrote, directed, produced, and promoted his way right on up (or down) to the cuff-shooting, pinkie-ring flashing, Vegas-headlining, talk-show-guesting present. There was something both absurd and touching in the freneticism of his lust to Entertain. (That lust inspired one of the funniest short pieces ever written: "Let's Hear It for a Beautiful Guy" by Bruce Jay Friedman, in the April 8, 1974, issue of *The New Yorker*. Look it up.) Davis was looked down upon by purists of every kind—musical, political, racial, you name it. He was forever doing something (marrying a very blond Swede, supporting Nixon, converting to Judaism) to alienate one of his many publics. Yet he raised America's consciousness in mostly unconscious ways. As Christopher Matthews wrote last week, "It's hard to imagine in this time of Eddie Murphy and Arsenio Hall what it was like to watch a black man back in the 1950s do a Jimmy Stewart impression." We're a little startled at how much we must have liked him, judging from how saddened we are at his death. Sammy Davis Jr., it seems, was much more, and much better, than the ridiculous "beautiful guy" on the talk shows. •

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WHITE HOUSE WATCH

VETO-READY

By Fred Barnes

The moment—10 a.m., May 22—was ripe for tough talk by Newt Gingrich, the House Republican whip, on civil rights legislation. Eight days earlier President Bush probably would have ignored Gingrich. Now he listened and didn't disagree. Instead of just saying he wants to sign a civil rights bill this year, Gingrich argued, Bush ought to assert that he is ready and willing to veto legislation that promotes racial quotas. That's good government, good politics, and a good negotiating strategy. Besides, the White House is in a stronger position than anyone had thought, Gingrich insisted. "In the House, we can sustain your veto," he said. Bush seemed persuaded. He raised only one red flag in the meeting with Gingrich and other GOP congressional leaders. He noted that Jewish groups, which usually oppose any legislation that encourages quotas, are backing the Kennedy-Hawkins bill. But Bush didn't pursue the point.

Why was Bush suddenly receptive to vetoing Kennedy-Hawkins, also known as the Civil Rights Act of 1990? He had met with leaders of civil rights, black, Hispanic, Jewish, women's, Japanese-American, Chinese-American, disabled, and conservative groups in separate sessions on May 14, 15, and 16. Bush felt his concern that the bill would force businesses to adopt racial quotas in hiring and promotions wasn't taken seriously enough. Nor did his call for talks to work out a compromise get as positive a response as he had expected. Bush was "disturbed" and "disheartened," an aide said. And willing to consider the veto option.

Before this round of meetings, Bush and his advisers figured the goodwill he'd generated among minorities (blacks especially) would provide an atmosphere for compromise. In amicable negotiations, the bill would be doctored to expunge (or at least weaken) any provision that even indirectly leads to quotas. This done, Bush would sign the bill and bask in the appreciation of the civil rights community. His popularity among blacks would remain extraordinarily high. Almost as nice, his standing among whites would hold up too, since he'd have dealt with their fear of quotas. Bush was dreaming.

The meetings, organized by White House communications chief David Demarest and public liaison Bobbie Kilberg, were (in Bush's words) "listening sessions." They would allow the president to explore how much room for compromise there is, particularly on the quota issue. The meetings—Bush hosted three, chief of staff John Sununu two—were also expected to drive home the point that Kennedy-Hawkins has broad support. The sessions were stacked with backers of the bill. Clint Bolick of the Landmark Legal Center for Civil Rights, who opposes the bill, was told the meeting he attended with Bush on May 16 would be half supporters, half foes. It turned out to be two-thirds supporters, one-third foes. Some conservatives, though, declined invitations. "I didn't see the utility in participating," said Patrick McGuigan of the Free Congress Center for Law and Democracy. "I've got lots of things to do."

Bush's rude awakening came in the first meeting on May 14 with sixteen black and civil rights leaders, three of them conservatives. "A lot of you have known me a long time," he said in opening remarks. "You know where I've stood on civil rights. . . . I've always been against discrimination and harassment in employment. . . . As you know, I've always been opposed to quotas. I don't believe they are consistent with the equal employment vision we all share." Most of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of potential areas of compromise between Kennedy-Hawkins and the administration's alternative bill, which is far narrower. At one point, Robert Woodson, who heads the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, dismissed both bills as irrelevant to the plight of poor blacks. "What is needed instead is an economic agenda for empowerment of the underclass," he said. This drew no response from the others, but Bush listened intently.

The source of Bush's heartburn is one provision of Kennedy-Hawkins, which would overturn or modify five 1989 Supreme Court decisions on civil rights. In *Wards Cove Packing Company* v. *Antonio*, the Court ruled that merely demonstrating a racial imbalance in hiring and promotions (with whites in the professional jobs, say, and blacks in the blue-collar ones) is not sufficient to prove unlawful discrimination. A plaintiff would have to cite a discriminatory action. Kennedy-Hawkins would reverse this, shifting the burden of proof in employment cases. If sued for bias, the employer would have to prove that the statistical imbalance was job-related and not caused by racial discrimination. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh contends this would prompt businesses to apply racial quotas just to avoid suits they'd have difficulty winning. At the meeting, Bush hoped to hear suggestions for eliminating or reducing the prospect of quotas. Instead, he encountered resistance, notably from Julius Chambers of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and Drew Days, head of the Justice Department's civil rights division in the Carter administration.

In truth, there isn't much room for compromise. Ralph Neas, the executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, points to a change in Kennedy-Hawkins that lessens the standard of proof for employers. Rather than proving the employment pattern is "essential to effective job performance," as the bill initially required, an employer would have to show it bears a "substantial and demonstrable" relationship. This, says Neas, "addresses any legitimate concern the

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Bush administration has had about the quota issue." Thornburgh and Boyden Gray, the White House counsel, regard this change as meaningless. John Dunn, the current chief of the civil rights division, says it's crucial that the burden of proof rest with the employee. That, in effect, would leave the *Wards Cove* decision intact, which is exactly what Kennedy-Hawkins is supposed to prevent.

At the meeting with women's and ethnic groups on May 16, Bush was still looking for a compromise or some assurance that the bill wouldn't create quotas. Supporters told him it wouldn't. One noted that the word "quota" isn't mentioned in the bill. Bush and Thornburgh exchanged glances over this. Finally, Bush popped a question. Since the sponsors claim Kennedy-Hawkins is not a quotas bill, he said, they shouldn't object to inserting strict anti-quota language, should they? His answer came from Thornburgh. Language like that would make the bill worse, Thornburgh said. It would produce a bill that "requires quotas and then bans them." With the burden of proof shifted to the employer, he said, a sound lawyer would advise his client to adopt quotas to stay out of court.

Two conservatives in the meeting, Bolick and Mark Liedel of the Heritage Foundation, reminded Bush that Senator Hubert Humphrey had specifically precluded quotas in the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Humphrey told his colleagues that the legislation "does not require an employer to achieve any kind of racial balance in his work force by giving preferential treatment to any individual or group." Yet preferential treatment has often been the result, they said. As the meeting wound down, Liedel kept raising his hand. "Would you like a final word?" Bush asked. Liedel said there's "a growing sentiment for a new direction in civil rights." He urged Bush to press for opportunities for the underclass, not job quotas for already successful minorities.

On May 17 Bush had planned upbeat, conciliatory remarks at a Rose Garden ceremony to honor the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, which President Reagan had sought to eliminate. Bush, disillusioned by what he heard in the meetings, decided to "harden the rhetoric," said a senior White House official. Bush attacked quotas. "No one here today would want me to sign a bill whose unintended consequences are quotas," he said. "Because quotas are wrong, and they violate the most basic principles of our civil rights tradition and the most basic principles of the promise of democracy.... I want to sign a civil rights bill, but I will not sign a quota bill." Bush said he is "confident" that a compromise can be worked out with civil rights leaders. But he didn't sound confident.

Conservatives were thrilled by the chance that Bush might veto Kennedy-Hawkins. "If the issue is drawn as quotas, we win," said McGuigan. "If the issue is drawn as civil rights, we lose." The White House is split on Kennedy-Hawkins. Sununu is skeptical, Gray critical, Thornburgh hostile. Another White House faction—Demarest, Kilberg, congressional liaison Fred McClure, Republican chairman Lee Atwater—are more favorable. The bill, says Neas, is backed by large enough majorities in the House and Senate to guarantee passage and cloture in the Senate. But Neas does not claim veto-proof support. Enter Gingrich and his veto strategy. Bush doesn't want to veto Kennedy-Hawkins, says Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater, but he will if he has to. •

Stalking the Romanian election.

CEAUSESCU'S GHOSTS

By Anna Husarska

BUCHAREST

The biggest portrait of Ion Iliescu, the winner of Romania's May 20 elections, hung outside Bucharest University. But the president-elect was not alone in the photograph. Next to him was the all-too-familiar face of Nicolae Ceausescu. The caption read: "*Preteni*" (friends). The day after the election the portrait mysteriously disappeared.

What still remains is a huge banner with a quote from Adam Michnik: "There is no socialism with a human face, only totalitarianism with broken teeth." Further to the left are spelled out the words of the "hooligans' anthem":

Better to be a vagabond than a traitor
Better to be a hooligan than a dictator
Better to be a *golan* than an activist
Better to be dead than a communist

Every night for the last month, 5,000 to 10,000 mostly young people whom Iliescu calls "*golani*," or hooligans, have gathered at the university square of the capital to sing this song and to shout, "*Jos comunismul*" (down with communism) and "*Revolutia furata*" (stolen revolution). They surrounded the main intersection of Bucharest at the foot of the Intercontinental Hotel with a fence made of string and wire and called it the "neocommunist-free zone." For the sake of hundreds of foreign journalists staying at the hotel they put up banners saying, "Welcome to Golania" (for English-speakers) and "*Golans sans frontières*" (pour les Francophones).

On what was once the hotel's lawn, several dozen tents were put up to house hunger strikers, who have been protesting against members of the Communist *nomenklatura* running in the elections. On some tents are pinned the "honorary diplomas" that the National Salvation Front gave to participants of the December revolution, to show that many of the strikers are the very same people who five months ago fought in this square against the Ceausescu forces. The demonstration and the campground are a favorite backdrop for stand-ups

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of most TV broadcasting reporters but had little influence in the political game.

Supporters of the Front, which the demonstrators accuse of stealing the revolution, also shouted "*Jos comunismul*" at their rallies, but it is difficult to see at whom they were directing their slogan. No other party that ran in the elections has as many former Ceausescu *nomenklatura*, and the two other presidential candidates both have an ironclad alibi: sixty-six-year-old Radu Campeanu from the National Liberal Party spent the last seventeen years in France, and seventy-two-year-old Ion Ratiu from the National Peasants' Party was in Britain from 1940 until January of this year building his fortune in shipping and finance.

This alibi was also in part responsible for their poor showing: 10.5 percent voted for Campeanu and 4 percent for Ratiu. "They didn't eat the same soup as we did," an elderly woman voting for Iliescu told me. Her daughter, who cast her vote for the Liberal Party candidate, immediately added, "But Iliescu didn't eat this soup either, he was fed at the *nomenklatura* restaurants."

The links with the ancien régime were the most serious accusations brought against the Iliescu team. In the week before the elections, most posters for Front candidates in the streets here had a hammer-and-sickle sticker and the initials of the Romanian Communist Party added. Yellow posters of Ratiu with his unmistakable bow tie and of the elegant Campeanu were usually untouched, but this was rather a sign of indifference or self-confidence on the part of their adversary. In the countryside it was the other way around. I visited Scornicesti, the birthplace of Ceausescu (a village of 13,000 recently promoted to the status of town and provided with an Olympic-size stadium). There the posters with Iliescu and the Front's symbolic blue rose were duly framed and hung on every public building, and there was literally one poster of the liberals and none of any other party. I was told that the situation was similar in most of the countryside, with the possible exception of Transylvania.

In spite of protests from organized opposition groups and university square demonstrators, the provisional authorities, made up mostly of Front people and the Front's front people, decided to hold elections just five months after the revolution, to take advantage of the political immaturity of the nation still traumatized by forty years of dictatorship, afraid of the Securitate (whose fate was never clarified), and not even sure whether the spontaneous revolution was in reality a prearranged coup d'état by part of the old guard. "Our nation is like a sick man, and the doctor, instead of curing, is taking advantage of the illness, increasing the fever," said Gabriel Liiceanu, from the intellectual opposition's Group for Social Dialogue. "There can be no free elections if people are not free in their minds. This nation has to be changed first," he said in a TV broadcast.

A democratic education was not possible in five months, and the provisional authorities only perpetuated the old schemes inherited from the Ceausescu period. In its campaign the Front used the state apparatus and infrastructure to perform the same rituals and gregarious scenarios of collective hysteria that Romanians have known for dozens of years. And it worked. "Not because the nation is stupid, but because it is ignorant, unprepared for exercising democracy," says Liiceanu.

It was also unprepared to exercise the democratic act of voting, and here again hardly anything was done by the authorities to make it easier. The procedure was complicated, there were not enough polling stations, and compliance with voting regulations was lax, to say the least.

Starting at 7 a.m. I visited a dozen polling stations in Bucharest, and at all of them confusion reigned among voters and electoral commission members alike. "These are telephone directories and not ballots," one voter said to me as he was glancing through the three letter-sized booklets of up to thirty-two pages (for president, senate, and chamber of deputies). All in all seventy-two parties were running, plus candidates on independent lists and independent candidates.

People had to use a rubber stamp with the word "VOTAT" to mark their ballots. Eighty-six percent of Romanians rubber-stamped Iliescu and some sixty-seven percent his National Salvation Front's candidates for Parliament.

The next day in two embassies, four hotels, and many corridors foreign observers (who totaled 430) were giving contradictory assessments of the extent to which the voting was really free. The observers' group sent by President George Bush and led by Governor Garrey Carruthers of New Mexico declared: "The Romanians have taken a giant step toward a new democracy. . . . In our view it was a proper election. . . . We were unable to discover anywhere in our observations obvious, systematic fraud in the electoral process." The statement was music to the Front's ears, and the following day's *Azi* reproduced it on the front page. Personally I am rather inclined to side with the headline of the opposition daily, *Romania Libera*: "Revolution + Elections = Democracy?"

A scene I witnessed is quite telling. It happened in a polling station near Hala Traiana in Bucharest at 1 a.m., after it was decided to extend the voting to allow everyone to cast their ballot, and after the exit polls were already announced. A small, frail babushka in her late seventies with a black scarf around her head and few teeth left was finally in front of the electoral commission after having stood patiently in line for four hours. She gave her ID card and then looked with a mixture of puzzlement and desperation at the three booklets and the rubber stamp she was handed.

A young energetic man immediately showed up and proposed to help. He took the voting paraphernalia from the babushka and asked, "Iliescu?" She answered, "Da" (for the president). "Frontul?" "Da" again (for the senate). "Frontul?" "Da" (for the chamber of deputies). The democratic right of rubber-stamping the incumbents was performed by a strange proxy without

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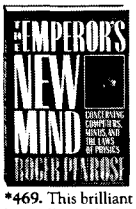

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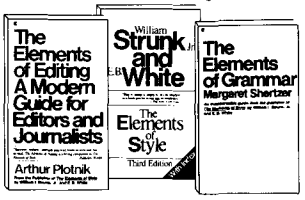

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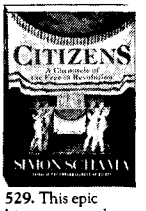

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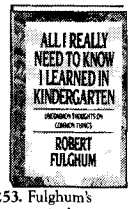

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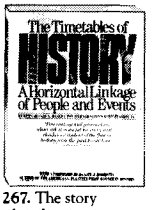

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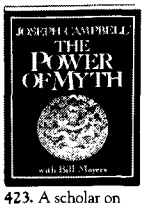

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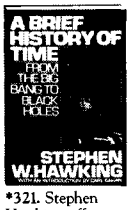

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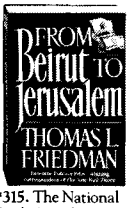

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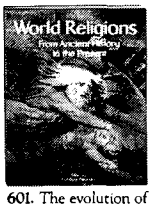

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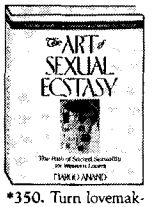

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the two even bothering to go into the voting booth.

Intrigued, I asked the woman why did she vote this way. "Because he obliges me," she answered, vaguely pointing to the young man. "This man obliged you?" "No, Ceausescu," she answered. "But Ceausescu is dead," I said. "No, no, he is not." At this point I was convinced that my broken Romanian had betrayed me, but my friend Carmen repeated the same question in proper Romanian. The woman said exactly what I had understood. At this point her granddaughter was getting pretty nervous and led the old woman away, so I was unable to find out in which sense she meant it. But she was positive about it.

ANNA HUSARSKA is a foreign editor at the Polish independent daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

Indian fishing rights and wrongs.

RACE BAITING

By Weston Kosova

VILAS COUNTY, WISCONSIN

They'd been arriving steadily since an hour before sundown: packs of teenagers sporting beer logo baseball caps, middle-aged women with big jewelry and big hairdos, their burly, crew-cut husbands decked out in fluorescent-orange hunting jackets, young couples with small children. By nine o'clock on a cold Saturday in April, a shade fewer than 400 angry whites had pressed into the clearing around the boat landings at Star Lake, twenty miles from the Michigan border. They came to confront the ten Chippewa Indians spearfishing in small boats and the hundred or so Indians watching the annual rite from the shore.

"Why don't you go back to the reservation and collect more welfare, huh?" an elfin man, waving a "SEEKING EQUAL RIGHTS IS NOT RACISM" sign, shouted to a group of Chippewa standing at the edge of the woods. "What's the matter? You want more teepees? How about I get you some more peace pipes? I know you like smoking that funny-smelling grass." His buddy spat a slice of tobacco juice in the Indians' direction, eliciting derisive laughter from whites nearby. Two hundred feet away, the crowd was attempting to drown out the Indians' ceremonial chants and drumbeats with police whistles, air horns, and a mocking "Hi how are ya, Hi how are ya" chant of their own. The din erupted into a turbulent clamor after the bevy of TV news reporters switched on the floodlights.

Scenes like this have become a springtime fixture in the Northwoods. During the month before Wisconsin's rod and reel season opens each year, the Chippewa spear for walleyed pike, which come to spawn in the freshly melted shallows of Star Lake and the other hundreds of lakes that freckle the upper part of the state. Under nineteenth-century treaties the Chippewa relinquished vast stretches of northern Wisconsin to the U.S. government in exchange for permanent, exclusive spearing rights on the lakes in ceded territories.

Some five generations later the Chippewa are finding it increasingly difficult to preserve their heritage (for example, less than 2 percent of those living on the Lac du Flambeau reservation can speak Ojibway, the Chippewa language). Spearing is one of the few unspoiled traditions still practiced by the Chippewa. But century-old treaties granting Chippewa privileges denied to non-Indians do not sit well with many of the whites living in the Northwoods—people who weren't grieving much over the degeneration of Chippewa culture in the first place. In the past five years resentful residents of northern towns such as Minocqua and Lac du Flambeau have been turning up at the boat landings during spearing season in increasing numbers, hoping to whip up public ire against the Indians and force abrogation of the treaties. So far they've been only half successful.

Early last year District Court Judge Barbara Crabb upheld the legality of the treaties, writing that Indian tribes "have the same rights as any other resident of the United States to enter into contractual agreements and to go to court to enforce their rights under those contracts." In reaction to the ruling, hundreds of whites stormed police lines at northern lakes and threw rocks and ball bearings at spearfishers and Chippewa bystanders.

The protests this season were much tamer, primarily because police took to patrolling the landings in helmets with face shields, flak jackets, and jackboots, but also because the protesters wanted to avoid the negative news coverage they attracted last year. "The media make us look like we're a bunch of racists," said a motel owner from a nearby town. To help revive the pristine image of the Northwoods, the local group that organizes the protests, Stop Treaty Abuse, encouraged protesters to watch their mouths around cameras and intercepted signs with patently racist slogans. (They missed the guy in the "Custer should have finished the job" T-shirt.)

Away from the cameras, though, looser lips still prevailed. "That's all we got up here nowadays, niggers and Indians and Indians and niggers," mumbled a man eyeing a black reporter. Later, in the woods by the water, a bearded man in a hunting vest bragged to his friend, "If I ever caught an Indian spearing on my lake I'd kill him. Oh, I'd probably regret it for the rest of my life, but I swear to God I'd do it."

Throughout the night, protesters repeated a familiar litany of complaints against the Chippewa. Some insisted that spearing is physically cruel to the fish. "You don't realize how painful it is for the walleye to be speared like that, in the back. It's savage, really," a young angler said, writhing as he spoke to emulate a

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walleye in agony. Others, approaching subtlety, argued that because Indians are American citizens they aren't entitled to special rights under the Constitution. ("Do you know what this is?" a gray-haired man in a baseball cap asked, removing a small booklet from his pocket. "This is the Constitution of the United States. How many nations under God does it say? One nation under God, it says. Not two nations. One nation.")

The most common charge against the Chippewa spearers, though (and one that has given the protests widespread sympathy among Wisconsin residents), is that they mostly take spawning females, and as a result deplete the next generation of fish. "If they keep it up, by the time my kids grow up there won't be any fish left in the lakes," a resort owner said, echoing the words of restaurant and motel owners, whose businesses are dependent on the summer tourist season. They argue that tourism is down because potential fishermen are scared off by the spearfishing.

But practically no one outside Wisconsin knew Indians were spearfishing here before rock-throwing whites made it headline news. And actually, the walleye stock in Wisconsin lakes is in no danger. The Chippewa go out of their way to prevent overfishing of the lakes. Under the terms of the treaties, the Chippewa may spear 100 percent of the safe harvest (the number of fish that can be taken without risking future stock) on lakes in ceded territory. But they never do. Last year, for example, wildlife ecologists set the safe harvest number at 110,000 walleye. In order to leave enough for the commercial fishing season, the Chippewa, in turn, declared a self-imposed limit of 40,000—and took only 16,054 of that. Rod and reel fishermen, by contrast, took 672,000 walleye, according to Department of Natural Resources estimates: *six times* the safe harvest. What's more, 84 percent of the walleye speared last season were male (every fish speared is weighed, measured, and sexed on the landing). And each year the Chippewa restock lakes with 700,000 walleye fingerlings, raised in the fish hatchery on the Lac du Flambeau reservation.

These figures are no secret in an area where fishing is a major industry. And yet anti-Indian hostility in surrounding towns climbs each year at the onset of the spearing season. *The Wisconsin State Journal* likened the protests to those in Selma in the '60s. The similarities evident enough: "Why don't you go back to where you came from? We can take care of our own Indians here," said one protester to a newspaper photographer. But the comparison falls short. In Selma, whites reacted to blacks' overtures for rights. Indians in the Northwoods haven't protested or demanded anything. On the contrary, the Chippewa maintain the status quo, passively abiding by venerable treaties and their conditions.

Still, racism alone doesn't explain what brings people to the landings. Whites and Indians have been living together here for generations. Many whites pass through the Lac du Flambeau reservation daily. Their kids go to the same public schools as the Indians. In the end the protests may have less to do with Indians and fish than they do with whites' frustration at northern Wisconsin's slack economy. As industry in Wisconsin fell over the last quarter century, the previously small manufacturing base here shrunk, leaving many northerners out of work. Today northern Wisconsin is an almost exclusively tourism-based economy—and it is struggling. Tourism is declining precipitately, as more families are choosing modern resorts with golf courses and swimming pools over rustic camping and fishing. As a result, unemployment in Vilas County reached 11.5 percent in 1988. The year before, per capita income was just $12,123. And although protesters complain that the Indians are enriching themselves at their expense, the Chippewa are much worse off economically. Last year unemployment on the Lac du Flambeau reservation hit 49 percent.

Whites here are angry that northern Wisconsin has become an anachronism, a quaint place where people from the city come to escape the "real world"; angry that intrusive downstate judges have relinquished their control of the land while at the same time reaffirming the significance of the Chippewa; angry that meddling reporters from New York have allowed the rest of the country to look upon them as a "bunch of racists." It's an old story. Whites have once again made the Chippewa the load bearers of their general discontent. But after 300 years of such treatment, the Indians are in no position to bear the white man's burden. •

Why the dollar is weak enough.

STOP THE BUCK HERE

By James J. Cramer

For ten years we have listened to American manufacturers' complaints about the need for a weakened U.S. dollar. For most of that time the manufacturers were right. In the early '80s American manufacturing might was decimated as every industrialized country in Asia and Europe bombarded us with goods in return for inflated dollars. So we as a nation embraced the concept of debasing our own currency for the latter half of the decade in order to give American manufacturers a chance to retool, rebuild, and ultimately become competitive with the rest of the world's developed nations.

With the help of worldwide central bank coordination in 1985, the dollar plummeted versus the yen, the pound, the franc, and the deutsche mark, making imports uncompetitive with homegrown products and allowing our manufacturers to gain worldwide market

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share. The weak dollar, coupled with import restraints on autos and steel, provided an effective shield and a fearsome sword for America's manufacturing. But now, with the rapid decline in America's trade deficit—from a monthly average of $12 billion in 1987 to $8.4 billion in the most recent month, March—it's time to ask whether the job is complete and the dollar should be allowed to rise. To answer this we have to consider the potential benefits and liabilities of a strong currency for all Americans, not just manufacturing America.

The Commerce Department's monthly trade deficit figures broken down by trade partner and product show that things are better than we think. In the past five years Americans have learned to do more than sell hamburgers and Coke; we've learned to make things better, and cheaper, than was thought possible. Most important, the massive retooling in the aerospace, automobile, and capital goods (those goods used to make consumer products) sectors has worked. Much of the rebalance of trade—both import and export—can be traced directly to improvements in American manufacturing abilities. Almost each month for the past two years there have been big gains in exports of advanced technology, telecommunications, aircraft, and finished manufactured products. Non-auto capital goods manufacturers doubled exports during this period, and non-auto consumer goods exports tripled.

In other words, given the choice between products made by a Boeing or an Airbus, a Cat Tractor or a Komatsu, or an Intel or a Toshiba, the order will probably go to the American alternative. Further, the rapid decline of the trade deficit at a time when the dollar has stopped declining shows that American quality may be trumping price. Boeing, for example, has been gaining market share in other countries, even though its planes now cost a lot more in the local currencies. At the same time, we've learned to live with fewer European luxury car imports and high-technology products. Advanced manufactured items have also slipped.

So why aren't we running a trade surplus? Two words sum up the problem: oil and Japan. Neither will be much affected by a further decline in the dollar. The price of oil, which is denominated in dollars, doesn't decline with a lower dollar. A weaker dollar will fail to curtail the $5 billion monthly outflow for oil payments; in fact, the figure could rise, since OPEC will be more inclined to raise prices to maintain worldwide purchasing power with the dollars it receives.

Nor will a decline in the dollar help our relationship with Japan. A few years back it was common to hear—from Harvard economist Martin Feldstein, among others—that America won't solve its trade problems until the dollar sinks to 90 yen. Granted, the dollar never belonged at 260 yen, where it stood in 1985. But in 1988 the dollar dropped to 120 yen and this didn't stimulate Japanese demand either. In 1986 the annual U.S. merchandise trade deficit for all countries stood at $143 billion; it should fall to under $90 billion this year. Yet throughout this period the U.S. trade deficit with Japan has remained at $50 billion. The most important "accomplishment" of this devaluation is the wholesale selling of American real estate and corporations—particularly high-tech companies—to Japan at bargain-basement prices. Despite our newfound prowess in telecommunications, semiconductors, and other capital goods, we simply haven't been able to penetrate Japan in any meaningful way. In the meantime we are buying $20 billion worth of their autos, and billions in lower technology items such as VCRs, televisions, cameras, and video games.

But as an excellent trade report recently published by the investment house of First Boston points out, if the trade talks would somehow get Japan to increase its total consumer and capital goods imports from 2 to 4 percent of GNP (still low compared with the United States' 5.7 percent), the change would virtually eliminate our trade imbalance. This magazine and other commentators have criticized the "Structural Impediments Initiative"—the U.S.-suggested method of opening up Japanese trade barriers—as a "protection racket" for its misguided attempt to aid America's "inferior" manufacturing. But there is clearly something wrong with America's trade with Japan, and it won't be solved by a lower dollar. Although SII may not be the perfect method of opening up Japanese trade barriers, it does attack the web of written and unwritten regulations in Japan that has successfully shut us out of the Japanese markets.

Of course, some industries would lose immediately if the dollar were allowed to rise. The big paper, steel, and plastic commodity makers would suffer. But many of these companies have used the intervening period of protected paradise to build or buy manufacturing capacity outside the United States instead of hiring and building in our country; sometimes it is difficult to tell which companies are truly American and therefore worth "protecting." Thus there is obvious justice in the policy shift: those that have sunk money into rebuilding would remain competitive; those that haven't shouldn't be propped up anyway.

On the other hand, a strong dollar would create two big winners: the American financial system and the American consumer. If the late 1980s were years of Phoenix-like reinvigoration for American manufacturing, the years were devastating to America's financial clout. Through bad lending, overbuilt real estate markets, and deregulation, the investment and commercial banking industry has been trashed. Our large money center banks are all short of capital. Many of our investment banks are struggling to stay alive. They need lower interest rates. The only way to get rates down without a nasty recession (which would reverse many of America's manufacturing gains) is through a strong dollar, which would attract foreign capital to our government bond market and allow the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates to restimulate the economy.

Without a stronger dollar these financial institutions will not be able to help subsidize further worldwide

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expansion of America's exporting abilities. Already America's advanced technology and telecommunications companies are complaining that American banks aren't helping to finance efforts in Eastern Europe, perhaps the greatest new market ever. A stronger dollar would also attract foreign financing to the massive government S&L bailout.

The average consumer would benefit from a stronger dollar because he's trying to buy essentials at the lowest price possible. Often these essentials, such as shoes or pants, are imported; the price of these goods would drop with the dollar's appreciation. Of course, those who work at manufacturing plants that require a weak dollar to be competitive would be injured. But most Americans don't work on the assembly line; they work in service industries, which would be unaffected by the dollar's appreciation.

With the brainwashing we have all received about our inability to compete globally, the argument for a strong dollar right now seems unpalatable, if not absurd. But either we can accept the market's view that the dollar is too cheap, or we can continue to coordinate a policy that is inflationary and counterproductive and benefits manufacturers (the third of the economy that no longer needs support) while sacrificing the two-thirds (the consumer and financial portions) that need help desperately.

JAMES J. CRAMER is president of Cramer & Co., a New York investment management firm.

Testing Poland's patience.

THE AGE OF SOLIDARITY

By Adrian Karatnycky

GDANSK

It should have been a moment of resplendent triumph. Here in Gdansk, nearly a decade after its creation, after surviving martial law repression, and after a spectacular wave of worker militancy that led to the formation of their own government, the leaders of Poland's Solidarity trade union gathered in late April for their second national congress at the austere Olivia sports arena. But the meeting was oddly subdued. The bloom is off the movement that launched Eastern Europe's epochal revolution.

Coming back to the same hall where I had observed the first congress (see "In Congress Assembled," TNR, September 30, 1981), the differences were palpable. In 1981 most union leaders were in their twenties; this time the average age of the delegates was forty-two. The delegates in Gdansk represented just under two million dues-paying members, a far cry from the ten million who flocked to Solidarity's ranks during the heady months after the shipyard strikes of August 1980.

Even the Western media seemed disenchanted. Many reporters stayed only a couple of days, long enough to record Lech Walesa's election as union leader. (He won with nearly 80 percent of the vote.) In September 1981 the Solidarity trade union congress seemed to be at the center of the world's attention; at this congress photographers strained for a new angle from which to take pictures of its leader—one of the world's most photographed men. Indeed, much of the interest at the congress was sparked not by trade union or political controversies, but by Walesa's peripatetic flirtation with the office of president of Poland.

Solidarity's second congress was an acknowledgment of the union's loss of political innocence. Having toppled a Communist government and replaced it with one of its own, Solidarity was now grappling with more prosaic questions. Matters of concern were now "expanding service industries," creating a "Labor Protection Fund," and allowing for "voluntary early retirement." Nine years ago Solidarity was part trade union, part political party, part alternative culture. It embodied all the interests of the real Poland. Now, the union is an important force, but increasingly one force among many.

This is, of course, a reflection of the Solidarity movement's success. Solidarity has achieved the goal of a pluralistic Poland. And in the union's documents there are the beginnings of a differentiation—polite but clear—from the policies of the government. Is Solidarity a political party? No, the delegates decided, although it should have its own representatives in Parliament. Is it a trade union? Yes, but its role will extend beyond collective bargaining to participation in private and cooperative economic ventures. The union is deeply troubled by rising unemployment and about the fate of pensioners. It seeks government support for the retraining of workers made redundant by reform. Among its first actions at the congress was the removal of a clause in its charter prohibiting strikes, imposed as a condition of compromise with the now routed Communist authorities.

For many who have left the union for the new pastures of governance and legislation, this gathering was a kind of class reunion, not on the congress floor but in the rafters. Seated here, detached from the fray, was Andrzej Celinski, the founder of Poland's famous underground educational center ("the flying university"), who served as Solidarity's national secretary at the last congress. He is now a senator from a predominantly rural constituency and so is cut off from the union's inner workings. What free time he has is spent organizing the work of the Parliamentary Citizens' Club, the Solidarity political umbrella group that unites conservatives, Christian Democrats, and so-

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cial democrats in an increasingly tenuous coalition.

On the second day of the congress a hulking figure in blue denim strode up the stairs of the sports arena. The silhouette was unmistakable. It was Jacek Kuron, longtime revolutionary and union adviser. Two days later Kuron would ascend the rostrum as Poland's labor minister to admit to delegates that the government "has no social program," and to urge the union to be his partner in shaping a social safety net to protect workers from unemployment, which will rise fourfold, from the current 260,000 to more than 1 million, or 7 percent of the work force in this country of 38 million.

Perhaps the most eminent union alumnus of all was Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the Polish prime minister. Speaking in precise, well-crafted paragraphs, Poland's most popular political figure delivered an extemporaneous elegy to the movement that had spawned him. With his stooped stance and his deep-set hound's eyes, Mazowiecki creates an instant intimacy with the public. Despite imposing a strict package of economic austerities on the Polish people, the ascetic, grandfatherly prime minister continues to ride high in the public opinion samplings as Poland's most popular leader.

Having created Eastern Europe's first democracy and given some of its best sons and daughters to the government, Solidarity is settling down and searching for a more precise purpose. Yet all this is not to say that the union is in crisis, as some reporters have suggested. For the last year it has been something of a silent partner, providing its own government with elbow room in which to work.

The Poland that the union now confronts is a country in the throes of deep recession. Industrial production is down by 32 percent since the beginning of the new year. Personal incomes are 60 percent of what they were last September. Although hyperinflation has been stopped, in March prices advanced by nearly 5 percent, suggesting an annual rate of about 75 percent. Janusz Beksiak, one of the union's leading economists, said, "We anticipated a recession. But this one is somewhat deeper than we expected." Beksiak bears some residual responsibility for Poland's economic state. It was in his Warsaw apartment that an economic team developed the contours of the government's policy. In its ranks were Leszek Balcerowicz, now the finance minister, and Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs.

Although the country has made a momentous push toward real prices and the elimination of state subsidies, its move toward privatization is only now beginning, at a very slow pace. Solidarity will have an important role in this transition. The union already has set up an Economic Foundation to create jobs for union members laid off by unprofitable enterprises and has approved plans for a trade union bank and insurance company.

One of Walesa's best-known advisers, Adam Michnik, is concerned about the economic shock treatment Poland is undergoing. He jokes about how fashionable "our Chicago boys" have become, but adds, "In our context, if they succeed in privatizing 25 percent of the economy, it will be an awful lot. Our paradox is this: To get to Galbraith's destination you have to travel along the Friedmanite road." Michnik acknowledges that political differentiation within the Solidarity coalition is unavoidable but believes that the left-right dispute isn't yet significant. "In order to quarrel about the sort of market we should have, whether Friedmanite or one with a human face, we first have to have a market."

Yet as living standards have plummeted, so have the personal fortunes of many Solidarity leaders. Walesa's approval rating, once at 82 percent, now is at 46 percent, down sharply in the last month. Finance Minister Balcerowicz, who has imposed food and commodity price rises, is highly unpopular. Only the gruff Kuron, known for his plainspoken weekly television talks to the nation on social and economic issues, has seen his public approval rating rise in recent weeks.

Although Walesa isn't a George Bush when it comes to reading the polls, he certainly does feel the pulse of the average Polish worker. And his innate political sense is telling him that the process of political reform has to move more quickly. Lech Kaczynski, one of Walesa's trusted aides and the leading proponent of Walesa for the presidency, believes the government and Parliament are moving too slowly in removing the old Communist elite, such as General Wojciech Jaruzelski and Interior Minister Czeslaw Kiszczak. Kaczynski insists that "in the context of Eastern Europe's changes, we have to scrap the arrangements of last year's roundtable agreements." Others, such as Bronislaw Geremek, leader of the Solidarity Parliamentary Citizens' Club, believe a quick move against Communist holdovers would contribute to instability. They also believe that if the roundtable agreements were scrapped entirely, parliamentary and presidential elections would have to be held soon, raising questions about the stability and continuity of the Mazowiecki government. Solidarity has taken a middle ground, by calling for new national elections by May 1991—a move that is sure to result in the emergence of new political parties out of the Solidarity umbrella.

Although Solidarity now sounds more and more like a Western trade union and many of its activists are beginning to take separate political paths, its leaders remain nostalgic about their revolutionary past. At the congress, the most enthusiastic response was reserved for Kazimieras Uoka, a Lithuanian trade union leader, who was greeted with a standing ovation and chants of "*Wolna Litva!*" ("Free Lithuania!"). And though these days Solidarity appears to be a victim of its own successes, it is likely to benefit in the end from the market system it has helped put into place. The inadequacies of democratic capitalism—the concentrations of wealth and disparities in income it produces—are certain to give the union a key role in the brave new Poland.

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Jack Kemp, caring Republican.

BLEEDING-HEART CONSERVATIVE

By Robert Kuttner

It's February 22. Jack Kemp is at a Holiday Inn podium, addressing the National Low Income Housing Coalition. The audience, about 300 "housing activists," includes local developers of non-profit housing, tenants from low-rent complexes, representatives of the homeless, remnants of 1960s community organizers. It would be a miracle if one of them had voted for George Bush. Yet Kemp is right at home. His speech is anything but HUD-speak, with its fervent references to "empowerment" and its missionary anti-poverty rhetoric. "I've taken a lot of heat," Kemp declares, "for trying to target block-grant money to the poor. Some of my bleeding-heart liberal mayors object. I say, I'm a bleeding-heart conservative." Posters around the room tout the coalition's current slogan: "Two cents for housing"—meaning 2 percent of the federal budget, or about $25 billion. "I'm surprised that you're asking for two more cents," Kemp ad libs. "Why don't you ask for five more cents?"

The showstopper, though, comes in the question-and-answer period, when Maud Hearn, national president of the grass-roots protest group ACORN (Association of Community Organizations Reform Now), demands a meeting with Kemp—*no later than March 15*—to discuss his plans for the thousands of homes HUD has foreclosed. "How about next Wednesday?" Kemp shoots back. The startled Hearn equivocates. "I'm shocked that you can't give me a date certain," Kemp persists, in perfect mimicry of ACORN style. "Will you meet with me—yes or no?" The audience roars. Afterward, Kemp apologizes good-naturedly: "I'm sorry, I've been wanting to do that to someone from ACORN for a long time."

Unlikely people have surprisingly warm words for Kemp. "This is the most open administration to housing advocates that I've seen," says Cushing Dolbeare, the respected doyenne of low-income housing organizers, who founded the coalition two decades ago. "Kemp stayed around at our meeting to talk with people. He must have handed out twenty-five business cards. He's the first HUD secretary who even came." Barry Zigas, president of the coalition, adds: "The left-wing kooks and the right-wing kooks have come together. But now that he's proved he can barnstorm and enunciate a vision, can he deliver resources for housing?"

When Bush appointed Kemp as secretary of HUD, it was a bit like Mikhail Gorbachev rewarding archconservative Yegor Ligachev with the wretched Agriculture Ministry. Much of Washington snickered; many in the Kemp camp groaned. Sending Kemp to HUD consigned the consummate anti-bureaucrat to the ultimate bureaucracy; and when Kemp arrived at the HUD building, a fitting temple of neo-Stalinist architecture, he found a mess that confirmed his worst stereotypes of big government. He spent much of 1989 digging out from the cascading Pierce scandal. He orchestrated a HUD reform bill that strengthened HUD's inspector general, substituted a point system for political approval of projects, and slashed the secretary's discretionary fund.

Despite rising sentiment that HUD should be scrapped, Kemp managed to persuade Bush and budget director Richard Darman to support a $4 billion, three-year housing program, the first new Republican housing initiative in a decade. The program, dubbed HOPE—Home Ownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere—is Kemp's attempt to impose his brand of economic populism on housing policy. It would give grants to encourage public housing tenants to buy their apartments. Other tenants would get subsidies to buy out developers who want to convert low-rent apartments to condos. It would expand the housing voucher program and give more money for local non-profit groups to rehabilitate properties now owned by HUD. In a variation on an old Kemp favorite, enterprise zones, communities could compete for Housing Opportunity Zone status by scrapping regulations. For the homeless, the program would provide shelter plus social services. It would also increase tax credits. Variants of Kemp's program are now working their way through the House and Senate.

Two traits distinguish Kemp from all of his HUD predecessors. To begin with, he is the first politician to hold the job. Meetings like this one, which discomfort most officials, energize Kemp. Second, he has a clear worldview—a populist conservatism. There is little doubt that he still aspires to a Kemp presidency. Until he went to HUD, in January 1989, Kemp's ideology and political skills found expression entirely in his eighteen-year career as a representative from suburban Buffalo. He was the original sponsor of the Kemp-Roth bill, which became the famous

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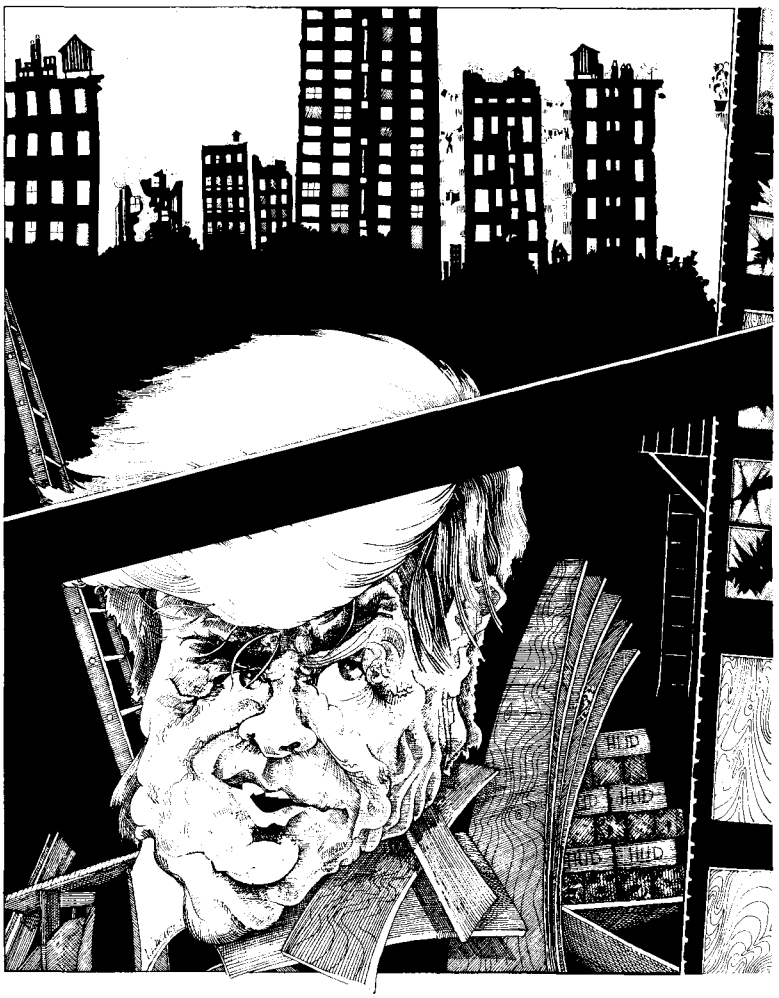
1981 supply-side tax cut. He followed that with the Kemp-Kasten bill to simplify and lower income tax rates, a forerunner of the 1986 tax reform. He also dabbled in international monetary policy, flirting with gold-buggery and pressing for a more expansionist (and interventionist) solution to the Third World debt. Along the way, he became something of an intellectual. His conversation is peppered with references to obscure theorists and small journals. But until 1989 Jack Kemp had never run anything bigger than a touchdown.

In his barnstorming around the country, Kemp's specialty is love-bombing the worthy poor—the tough, charismatic public housing mammas like Kimi Gray, who turned Washington, D.C.'s blighted Kenilworth - Parkside public housing complex into a model of tenant management and a mandatory photo-op for politicians. Kemp gets misty-eyed describing his appearance at the April national conference of tenant management activists, which Gray now chairs. "There were 900 Kimi Grays from all over the country," he marvels, poking the interviewer's knee for emphasis. "I'm talking about"—he lowers his voice—"blacks, and Hispanics . . . it's lifted their spirits to see this maniac at HUD, this bleeding heart, traveling around, listening to people tell their stories, listening to plaintive cries of people who've been treated with abuse and neglect. The challenge is to convince people on the left, right, and center that something can be done to give people a chance to have assets, and property, and capital, and education. How in God's name can we tell Poles democracy can work in Var-shaw-va"—Kemp carefully pronounces it in fractured Polish— "when we can't make it work in Harlem or East St. Louis?"



JACK KEMP BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Gray is a political Rorschach test. For conservatives, she is proof that the bureaucratic approach is poison. For liberals, tenant management proves that public housing, given adequate supports and tenant involvement, can work after all. "Kemp didn't invent tenant management," scoffs one housing activist who generally likes Kemp. "The Ford Foundation invented it in the 1970s, with the help of OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity] Legal Services. Kenilworth got an extra $50,000 per unit for rehab." In fairness, there is a huge backlog of public housing repairs, estimated at $20 billion to $25 billion. Tenant management on balance will save money, but done properly it won't be cheap. Kemp says nonetheless that he wants to see a million public housing tenants become homeowners. His alliance with nonprofit, tenant-activist groups is reminiscent of the 1960s, when the federal anti-poverty program went around city hall to fund community agencies directly.

In the Republican 1990s, Kemp's approach is doubly unnerving to mayors, for it comes after a decade of escalating pressure on housing prices and dwindling federal urban resources. On the one hand, according to Donald Borut, executive director of the National League of Cities, "He's brought some excitement about cities back to the Cabinet level. Someone is finally there advocating for cities. He's also available. Our people have met with Kemp more in a year than they met with Sam Pierce in eight years." On the other hand, Kemp's tendency to view HUD as an anti-poverty agency tends to annoy city officials, just as the original War on Poverty distressed them in the 1960s. "Our Community Development Block Grant has been cut from $72 million in 1978 to $51 million last year," says Edward Schwartz, Philadelphia's housing and community development director. "The block grant, by law, replaced a number of older urban programs. It was never intended purely as an anti-poverty program. Unless Kemp's program provides the cities with new money, it just pits the low-income coalition against the mayors."

Kemp's self-description as a bleeding-heart conservative is accurate, and is indicative of an intriguing trend. Along with fellow Conservative Opportunity Society Republicans Vin Weber and Newt Gingrich, he represents one faction of movement conservatives competing for Ronald Reagan's mantle. These cardio-

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cons carefully differentiate themselves from social Darwinist and libertarian cons. "On the far right," Kemp says, "there's one view of society and economy that says smugly, 'I made it, why can't you make it?' And some conservatives argue that since the problems are intractable, government can't contribute anything." Kemp believes government does have a role to play—in getting poor people out of dependency and into the mainstream.

The Heritage Foundation, which regularly criticized Reagan from the right, has also moved in this direction. Last year Adam Meyerson, editor of Heritage's magazine, *Policy Review*, wrote an article with the surprising title "Adam Smith's Welfare State." Conservatives make a mistake, he argued, when they equate the dynamism of capitalism with a simpleminded hostility to government. In the current (Spring 1990) issue, Weber declares, "I used to be a strict libertarian. In college and shortly thereafter I thought libertarianism was the only consistent and coherent intellectual response to the left. . . . But I have changed a lot of my thinking. . . . We have to put forward an agenda for domestic social programs that's better than the Democrats'."

"I've gone through a similar evolution," Kemp says. "I flirted with the economics of Hayek and Mises. It's great on paper. But in a democratic society, people are going to demand problem-solving by government. The fault line is no longer left versus right. It's elitist versus populist. Remember Mario Cuomo's speech about the two Americas? The problem isn't that America is caught immutably between poverty and opulence. Rather, it's caught between two economies—a mainstream economy in which people respond rationally to rewards like education, civility, and opportunity, and a poverty element that is written off because we think they don't want wealth and they wouldn't respond to rewards. I disagree, politically and morally. For some people, that link between effort and reward has been shattered. We have to restore it."

In this respect, Kemp's emerging housing strategy reflects his political philosophy generally. "The War on Poverty had noble purposes," Kemp says, "but it turned the incentive structure upside down." He wants to get rid of the "plantation mentality" that keeps the dependent poor locked away in housing projects and welfare traps, unable to better their condition without losing their aid. Kemp indignantly tells the story of Grace Capetillo, a Milwaukee welfare mother who scrimped and saved and managed to accumulate $15,000 in a savings bank for her daughter's college education—and was charged with welfare fraud. The story has a happy ending, he confides later. Kemp repeated the anecdote at a Republican fund-raising dinner, and a well-to-do businessman approached him afterward, asked for the woman's name and address, and set up a trust fund for the daughter. "Isn't that neat?" says Kemp.

This selective beneficence, in a nutshell, is not a bad metaphor for the limitations of bleeding-heart conservatism. Almost by definition, the approach helps the poor one deserving case at a time—while millions are left out. There aren't enough Republican millionaires to set up voluntary education trust funds for all the children of the poor—just as there isn't enough money in the HUD budget to bring the dream of home ownership, or even affordable rental housing, to more than a token few.

Unlike many conservatives, Kemp and Company are genuinely willing to have government intervene where the market fails to provide avenues of upward mobility to the deserving poor. But the obstacles to this vision are both fiscal and political. The current housing crisis is immense in scope. It involves not just a shortage of physical dwelling units, but also a gap between what market-produced housing costs and what poor people earn. Among people with incomes below the poverty line, 70 percent pay more than 45 percent of their total income on rent. According to a study by Cushing Dolbeare, using census data, even two-bedroom rental units—let alone houses—are beyond the economic reach of half the renter households of America.

However bold the aspirations, Kemp's program is a drop in the bucket. Pre-Reagan, the government was subsidizing about 350,000 new housing units every year. In the 1980s that dropped to barely 80,000—and even that amount was due mainly to Congress. Kemp's initiative involves a lot of repackaging and double counting. Something like 82,000 new units will be subsidized—about one-fourth the yearly average of the 1970s. But even this total includes subsidies to 4,800 families buying their public housing apartments and 12,500 families being relocated, rather than additional housing units. The Senate Budget Committee reckons that the bottom line in the administration housing request is about a billion dollars less than was spent on newly subsidized housing units last year—though Congress is likely to raise this by at least $3 billion.

For the homeless, Kemp's plan spends most of the new money on social services, not shelter. The Urban Institute estimates that on any given day there are 600,000 to 700,000 homeless people in America. Kemp's initiative would add 6,600 new units for the homeless. At that rate (if the homeless population stabilizes), all the homeless would be housed in a hundred years. Kemp's program for the homeless is also limited to street people with drug, alcohol, or mental problems. It excludes families who simply have been priced out of the housing market, the fastest-growing group of homeless.

Public housing once housed both the working poor and the dependent poor; in recent years it has become the housing of last resort for the poorest of the poor. Therefore, Kemp's goal of turning a million public housing tenants into homeowners is highly improbable, since the utilities, maintenance costs, and property taxes, not to mention mortgage payments, overwhelm their earnings, which average just half the poverty line. Kemp proposes a five-year subsidy to tide these families over the transition, as well as child care, health care, and

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job training assistance, all intended to move them into the mainstream. This, too, is admirable policy. But it essentially concentrates resources on a relative handful of families. The numbers simply don't work. Nor is it clear where the money will come from to replace the public housing units that are being privatized, or even to maintain existing complexes.

The same critique can be made fairly of Kemp's solution to the "expiring use" dilemma. About 350,000 subsidized apartments built by private developers in the late 1960s and early 1970s are now approaching their twentieth anniversary. Under the terms of the program, developers who received an immense subsidy to house the poor may take the property and run after twenty years. Critics argue that since these projects were built with public subsidy, they should remain in the pool of affordable housing; if the developer wants out, he should sell to the tenants or to some other non-profit group at a negotiated price. Kemp shares the goal but insists on compensating the developer at fair market value. This policy, costing a billion dollars, preserves the affordable housing, but at a huge cost per unit.

As a good deregulator, Kemp also contends that eliminating red tape—extended environmental reviews, exaggerated code requirements, the Davis-Bacon Act—is the ultimate solution to the cost of housing. This might help some, but even in areas of the country where land is cheap, unions weak, and regulation minimal, the affordability gap is almost as great as in metro areas. No other advanced country in the world expects the market to economically supply housing for the working poor.

Kemp is probably right that the solution to the housing crisis will require not 2 percent of the federal budget, but 5 percent—about $60 billion a year. But the people running the Bush Office of Management and Budget are anything but bleeding hearts. And Kemp, though something of an activist, is an astute enough politician to know that this administration isolates free-lancers. As a team player, he is an advocate only to the point of prudence. Looked at close-up, the $4 billion of "new" money for housing is almost entirely reprogrammed money from other HUD programs, some admittedly wasteful, which Kemp wants to cut in order to shift resources to his new initiatives. And as the budget summit puts "everything on the table," HUD money is newly vulnerable. Resources adequate to carry out Kemp's vision, however marketlike, are simply not in the cards.

Nonetheless, Kemp is onto something important. Bleeding-heart conservatism is a very old, quintessentially American idea. The overwhelming majority of America's poor people are not looking for uplift as a class. They want to join the great middle class as individuals. The idea that government should help them is as old—and as conservative—as free public education and the Homestead acts. By the same token, voters who oppose "handouts" are willing to reward the aspiring poor. But until Kemp or someone like him gets to the White House, there will be no budget director willing to put the administration's money where Kemp's mouth is.

In 1985 Jonathan Rowe wrote a prescient article in *The Washington Monthly* titled "What the Democrats Can Learn from Jack Kemp." Rowe concluded that the party of Kennedy and Roosevelt had forgotten the importance of aspiration and hope, that the Democrats, post-Mondale, were stuck in a rut of austerity. Rowe faulted Kemp for overdoing the virtues of tax incentives and stressing individualism and trickle-down to the exclusion of community and uplift. But since then, Kemp's populism has broadened and matured. His current view of incentive is interesting and appropriately complex—not just a question of marginal tax rates. It's not for nothing that he remains the liberals' favorite conservative.

Yet as a political creature with higher aspirations, Kemp seems oddly self-limiting. With his earnest optimism, his star quality, and his populist conservatism, he was in many respects the logical heir to Reagan. But Kemp did dismally in the 1988 Republican primaries. His genuine idealism and solicitude for the poor, for minorities and factory workers, which served him so well as a GOP representative from a blue-collar district, failed to move mainstream Kiwanis Republicans. The hard right understood that Reagan could be used, that his pieties were not to be taken literally, while Kemp struck them as alarmingly serious about ideas. Moreover Kemp—unlike say, a Newt Gingrich—fails to demonize his opposition. He doesn't attribute all of America's ills to the excesses of the 1960s. He repeatedly invokes the original poverty war, conceding its good intentions. Put him in a room with a liberal, and Kemp sees not an enemy but a potential convert. Despite his own devout and embracing conservatism, these otherwise attractive traits make him less than totally reliable as a partisan.

Ironically, at HUD Kemp seems to have found a frog pond of suitable scale for his talents—one big enough to command attention but small enough to have lots of those personal meetings that so energize him and so impress essentially Democratic constituencies with his sincerity. Yet precisely because of the company he now keeps, it will be difficult to leapfrog from HUD to higher office. Indeed, the more Kemp succeeds as a housing advocate, even in his own entrepreneurial terms, the more his conservatism will be seen as suspiciously liberal.

In the battle for the soul of the GOP and the presidential succession, Kemp faces social Darwinists on his right who insist that government is the entire problem, and country club Republicans in the center—Jim Baker and George Bush to name two—who are far less concerned about poverty or mobility. The right should have more appreciation of Kemp. Most polls continue to show that the voters trust Republicans more than Democrats to conduct foreign policy, manage the economy, hold down inflation, and resist higher taxes. Democrats still score only on the question of who cares more about the common American. If Republicans, via a Jack Kemp, ever figure out that they can capture that too, the Democrats might as well go out of business. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Elsewhere

Ignorance has not been bliss for some time now. Ever since the earth was drastically shrunk by communication systems, enlightenment makes our parochialism seem less blissful than lazy. In the film world this is particularly embarrassing. We set up categories and hierarchies in the world we know, without fully realizing the limitations of what we know. Here are two jolts to such arrangements. At the very least—and these films do more—they underscore how small a realm we pontificate about imperially.

In fact Hou Hsiao-hsien is not a new name to me. I saw two previous films of his at festival screenings, *Dust in the Wind* (1986) and *Daughter of the Nile* (1987); but only with his latest, **A City of Sadness** (Era), have I belatedly understood that he is much more than another homegrown "interesting" director. And this despite the fact that *A City of Sadness* is not as well constructed as the two others I've seen and, to judge by subtitles, is not always crystal clear. But by now his sense of drama, his perspicacious eye, and, above all, his modest yet thorough commitment as a national film bard make him an artist worth wide recognition.

Born in mainland China in 1947, he was a year old when his family moved to Taiwan, where he grew up, was educated, did his military service, and at twenty-seven entered films. He began directing in 1980 and in ten years has made nine features, besides doing other work. Taiwan, tried and troubled, has been his subject, and he has worked as every good artist has always done when dealing with his homeland: he has shown its uniqueness and its universality. The first element he treats with loving intimacy, the second he doesn't treat at all—it's there to be inescapably inferred.

Part of *A City of Sadness* was filmed in a province of mainland China just across from Taiwan, shortly before Tiananmen Square brought about travel restrictions. (Ironically, the Anthology Film Archives in New York is presenting the film to mark the anniversary of Tiananmen Square.) Set in the turbulent 1945-49 period, it deals with a Taiwanese family, a patriarch and his four grown sons, and the ways in which they do or don't weather those turbulences. Not all of the multistranded story registers equally well; but the violence of the times is vivid, and one story element, the romance of one of the sons—a deaf-mute photographer—is treated tenderly. What live especially in memory about this 158-minute film are Hou's visual gift (not limited to his eye for magnificent coastal scenery), his ability to make a story flow, and his treatment of common life as epic.

Pathfinder (Ifex) is, we're told, the first film to be made in the Lapp language. I hadn't been keenly aware that I'd never seen a film in Lapp, but *Pathfinder* was a welcome way to find out.

It's a first film by Nils Gaup, and since it's a Norwegian production, I assume that he, the crew, and most of the actors are Norwegian. The immediately striking fact about the film is how well it is made: Gaup knows how and how long to look at things. The cinematographer, Erling Thurmann-Andersen, absolutely surrounds us with snowy vastness. The principal actors are experienced and confident. This is no cottage-industry film—that's the first point. In no way is it unprofessional, so it tells us that the Norwegian cinema, of which I've seen perhaps five examples, has well-developed skills and talents.

The screenplay, written by Gaup, would interest social anthropologists for the very reason that it seems familiar. The story is based on a thousand-year-old legend, and it confirms yet again that peoples around the globe, isolated from one another, often evolve comparable myths. This is the classic story of a young man who risks his life to save his people, who might be Spartan or Roman or Babylonian but in this case are Lapps far above the Arctic Circle.

A band of foreigners, called Tchude, invade Lapland in winter and begin by wiping out an isolated family—except for the teenage son. He escapes and warns a larger settlement nearby, most of whose people flee to the coast. The boy is captured by the Tchude and forced, for his life, to lead them to the hiding place of the villagers. At the last, guiding them through a narrow, icy mountain pass, he tricks them, so that they all plunge to their deaths and the villagers, who expected slaughter, are saved. The lad is the pathfinder, and the legend is about him.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Longtime Companion. *A group of New York gays between 1981 and 1989, as AIDS arrives and brutalizes their lives. Honest and touching. (Reviewed 5/28/90)* **The Mahabharata.** *The chance to see a true acting ensemble, working in poetic scale—in Peter Brook's three-hour version of his nine-hour theater version of the Indian classic. (5/7/90)* **Q & A.** *Nick Nolte, Armand Assante, Lee Richardson, and other notable actors in a police-drug-corruption story that gives Sidney Lumet another chance to explore New York. The script sometimes stumbles, but the texture is fine. (5/21/90)* **Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!** *Audacious Pedro Almodóvar this time makes us care about the romance between an ex-mental patient and the porno star he kidnaps. Madrid melts. (5/14/90)* **—SK**

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Admittedly, one of the film's interests is sheer travelogue—seeing how Lapp people cook and eat and wash, the kind of lodges they live in, how they travel by reindeer sled, and so on. Apparently they all ski as a matter of course, with primitive equipment, in a way that would sweep the Olympics. (Some of the best camera work in the film is the traveling shots of skiers.) Regard for their children, as their most precious possession, seems the capstone of their ethos. This leads directly to a question that always plagues me about arctic peoples (and desert peoples): Why, through long centuries, have they remained in a climate where basic survival is Problem No. 1? Perhaps, in the past, they stayed because they didn't know of more congenial climates, but in more recent centuries? Every region has its difficulties, of course, but Lapland! (And the Sahara!) Well, perhaps there's a certain exultation just in the fact of being *able* to live there. I once sat through *Nanook of the North* with a poet-playwright, and afterward she said, "No wonder no one ever thinks of sending aid to the Eskimos. No one thinks of them as Third World. They *fit*."

Still, *Pathfinder* is more than a travelogue. It tells its story cleanly with a keen sense of theater-in-space. I'd guess that Gaup knows his John Ford. The Tchude, of different facial cast from the Lapps, are genuinely scary: we're never told why they invade, which somehow makes them more evil. The Lapps, most of whose features suggest the Inuit, are nicely graded in appeal. Above all, with this film Gaup obligates himself to continue, in Lapland or elsewhere.

It's a slightly scurvy trick to juxtapose a piece of Hollywood dreck with these two films of purposeful being. Yes, it would be easy to place a good American film after two pieces of imported dreck, but it happened that I saw these three films in this order, which made the third look even worse.

Bird on a Wire (Universal) stars Goldie Hawn and Mel Gibson. The program, distributed before the screening, listed nineteen stunt people and twelve animal trainers, so I was warned. The film kept its dire promise. I can't remember a picture with more car chases—certainly not one that ended in a zoo, where Mel and Goldie foil the bad guys with the help of lions and tigers and piranhas. From beginning to end, the picture is a frantic declaration of every kind of bankruptcy. After thirty minutes of *Bird*, life in Lapland began to look more attractive. •

The Open Marriage of True Minds

BY ANNE HOLLANDER

Simone de Beauvoir: A Biography by Deirdre Bair

(Summit Books, 718 pp., $24.95)

In the introduction to this massive book, Deirdre Bair says that her aim is to help future societies assess the real contribution of Simone de Beauvoir, determine why she matters. Beauvoir's personal fame still rests on her connection with Jean-Paul Sartre, although her international fame as a writer is based almost wholly on her prophetic work, *The Second Sex*, which was published in 1949, well before the current phase of feminism began. Besides that, she was the author of seven novels, a play, two books of philosophy, four volumes of memoirs, and about five other volumes of serious essays, apart from numerous introductions to the works of others, and many articles for periodicals. Her own view of the way she mattered was entirely as a writer, not as a lady-friend or as a feminist. She laid great stress on this, and disliked being remembered only as the author of a feminist document—the book, she said, that "anyone could have written."

Significantly enough, Bair does not publish a list of Beauvoir's works anywhere in this big volume. She claims to be disappointed by the prevailing emphasis on Beauvoir's life, compared with the attention paid to Sartre's writing; and yet she has made clear, in the form and the nature of her biographical study, where she really stands. Although Bair scrupulously describes every writing project that her subject undertook, she shows that in the case of Beauvoir, when all is really said and done, the life was the work. In fact, apart from the importance of *The Second Sex* to feminism, her other writings cannot compare to the great

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works of literature that lead vital lives apart from their authors'. Beauvoir's philosophical works have not endured, and her novels, using the same material as her memoirs, are ultimately unimaginative, limited by their confinement to her own milieu and her own kind of feminine philosophical perspective. Like the memoirs, they have mainly historical value. This book supports the reasonable view that despite her pride in her métier, Beauvoir's contribution to the future will not be as a creator, but as an example.

She is, indeed, a great example. Perhaps only the future will properly understand how great, since, as Bair points out, many of her youthful admirers even in France have no conception of the way of life into which she was born, or of the kind of social and intellectual training she had, and therefore no sense of the heroism in the life she undertook. It is now both respectable and easy—and perhaps normal—for a middle-class European woman to get an excellent education, become a writer, form friendships and amorous liaisons with other writers, edit a magazine, engage in politics, teach, travel, lecture, and never marry, keep house, or have children—to feel free to pursue what used to be thought of as a man's life. It is now considered *comme il faut*, moreover, to cast such a life in the secular and godless mold.

For Simone de Beauvoir, born into the haute bourgeoisie in 1908, such a course was initially unimaginable. She began not only chained to ancient European ideals of female domestic and familial duty, but constrained by the rigidly Catholic upbringing that her mother imposed on her and by the limited education then provided for French upper-middle-class girls. Before she could lead her famous life, she had to imagine it; and French precedents were conspicuously lacking. American and English girls were already socially much freer at the time, and ideas about their education were much more advanced in those enterprising Protestant countries.

But history was, in fact, on Beauvoir's side, and so was an acute family poverty, which precluded a dowry and an arranged marriage at the correct social level. Although French women did not get the vote until 1946, a freer social existence and a better higher education did become more available to French girls in time for young Beauvoir to profit from them. She did not have to run away from home to satisfy her rising intellectual ambitions, or to avoid an odious proposed spouse. The family did not try to keep her stitching by the impoverished fireside throughout a genteel spinsterhood, but urged her to train to be a teacher and earn her keep. Her religious faith might just have to be sacrificed; they were proud of her prodigious distinction as a student, and she was still a credit to the family, even if unmarriageable on the right terms.

But she was pretty, too, and loved admiration; and her eventual heroic rebellion was manifested in the realm of sex. A true bluestocking was nothing new, but a female intellectual life was traditionally supposed to be carried on in a state of celibacy, modeled rather on the example of the great female saints and brilliant abbesses of the Middle Ages, who corresponded with popes, kings, and sages, arguing theology and swaying policy from the cloister. Seriously learned and thoughtful girls were supposed to avoid men, or else to be masculine themselves, to leave not only marriage, children, and housekeeping but the whole feminine erotic life to their sillier and more worldly sisters. Female artists and poets were known to engage in free sexual expression; female philosophers, never.

Beauvoir's relationship with Jean-Paul Sartre was a triumph of the impossible, a liaison preserved in a precarious, constantly readjusted balance. Bair shows Beauvoir maintaining the balance more or less single-handedly, protecting their autonomy but at the same time staying conventionally feminine in relation to him. This did not mean conventionally female, as a procreative wife and guardian of his hearth, or quasi-masculine, as a like-minded friend and comrade-in-arms. It meant imaginatively feminine, as a mistress and an intimate. She would be a sort of co-conspirator, someone unaccountable, wondrous, exigent, exciting, necessary. But since this amorous project was undertaken by two intellectuals, the mistress also had to be a colleague, not a pure engine of primitive temperament and erotic pleasure, but an equally well-equipped intellectual contender who would provide constant mental excitement while never really threatening him as a thinker.

Meanwhile the freedom that Sartre wanted was not just abstract but specifically sexual, and he reserved the right to collect other women with her knowledge and approval, leaving her the same freedom, just as if she were a male friend with the same leanings. How to work all this out? There were no models for this style of joint life, not in French intellectual history, domestic history, or anywhere. No wonder Beauvoir had to write about it constantly, no wonder the two of them had to discuss themselves constantly, together and with others, in print and in letters. It had to be grasped while it was happening, talked and written into existence and brought under intellectual control, in what appears to have been a great absence of any unspoken intuition. She solved the problem of his other women by entering into semi-amorous relations with them herself, emphatically not as a rival male but as a fellow narcissist, continuing her feminine theme by playing sexual games with them under Sartre's voyeuristic eye.

During most of their long affair from 1929 until the 1970s, Beauvoir gave Sartre the priceless gift of her intensive editing, bringing to bear not just her formidable intelligence and understanding of his thought, but all her linguistic skill and taste on every bit of his writing. She made him stop sounding pedantic and musty, clarified his diction, kept him up to his own standard. At the same time, as her newly published letters show, she adored him, and unreservedly lavished the treasures of her heart on him—notably always addressing him in the letters as "*vous*," like a proper French bourgeoise addressing a beloved parent. She made it abundantly clear, and not just to him, that her intellect was at his service before she used it for herself, as a village bride's maidenhead was at her seigneur's disposal. In relation to him, her intellectual posture was going to be traditionally feminine, too.

And ultimately his life and work were better served than hers by her determination to keep her woman's place and yield nothing of her feminine right to have a thrilling lover to serve, adore, torment, and manage, rather than simply a reliable husband. She took great risks to do this, and her behavior seems very contradictory, her attitude often obscure; she was struggling to find a modern path for the intellectual woman to take, one that would command respect for the full use of heart, body, and brain together, and for the full play of moral sensibility in a woman's life. She would not be a Muse of Fire, a woman known only for her legendary effect on great men, like Alma Mahler, Misia Sert, Lou-Andreas Salomé, any more than she would be a wifely chattel. She would not choose another woman and be safe inside the homosexual fortress. And she could not be solitary, a priestess of worldly renunciation.

She invented the idea of intellectual union as an image of the sexual bond; but this meant arranging to be perpetually "had" by him in front of everyone, according to the old notions she had inherited of what the sexual bond was. Beauvoir's methods only point up how much things have changed in the way the sexes approach each other. Her example

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does not even properly stand at the beginning of the new order; she marks, rather, the end of the old.

Inevitably her independent intellectual image was tarnished. It wasn't harmed by her sexual liaison with Sartre, which caused such disapproval in the social world, but rather by her quasi-wifely insistence on his absolute importance in the universe, not just to her; and thus implicitly on her own importance only as an adjunct to his, despite her tireless writing. Her image as imaginative mistress was similarly damaged by her motherlike wish to stand between Sartre and the importunate world, monitoring his practical affairs, choosing what appearances he would or would not make, explaining him to others when he did not explain himself—all of this much to the noticeable irritation of spectators.

Thus she would deal with all the unpleasantness and take all the blame, being the villain so that he might go out to play unhindered and preserve his appealing flavor before the public. She was like the unworldly doctor's wife who collects the fees he fails to charge, or the charming wastrel's wife who staves off the creditors with shaming lies. In such cases, doctor and wastrel are always better company and seem wiser and nicer than madame; but madame's status as true wife preserves her honor in the performance of these thankless marital tasks. Beauvoir was the colleague and the lover, not the wife. She often made him seem unhappily married when he carefully was not, and made herself seem hypocritical, since she proclaimed herself his critic and equal, not his agent and keeper. But Bair believes that Beauvoir assumed this awkward position in Sartre's life with his express connivance, and that they both understood his need to have her do it, as much as her wish to do it, however it seemed to outsiders.

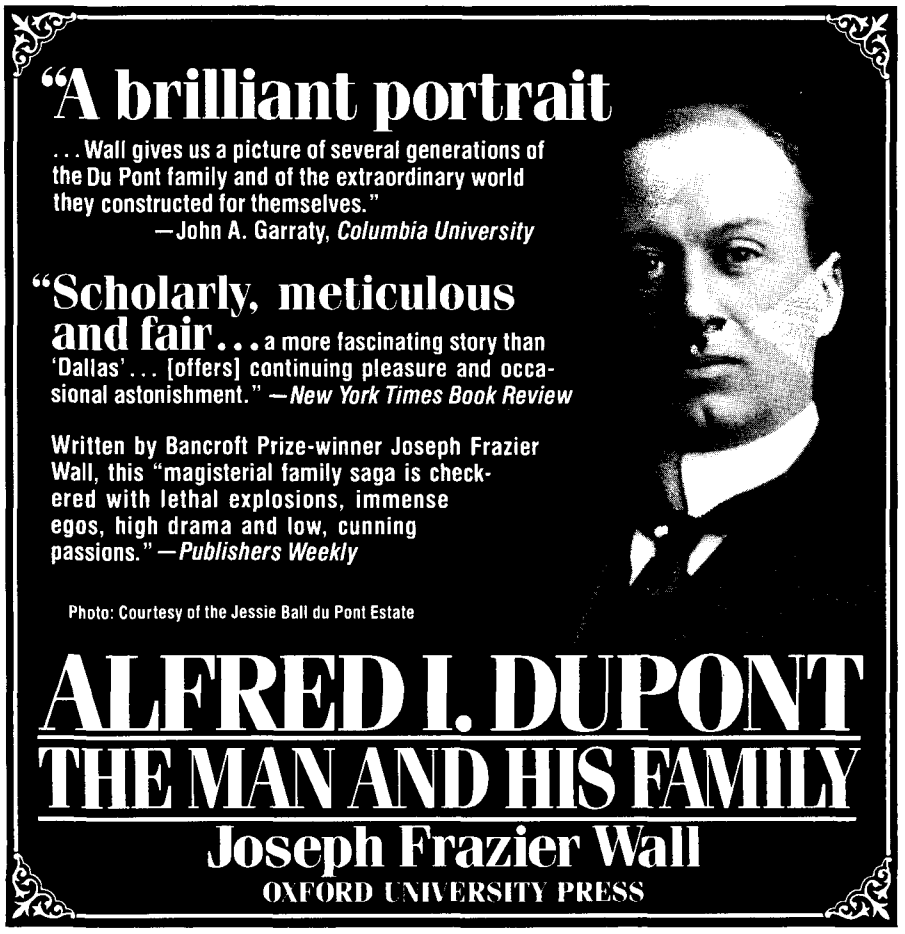
As a free-standing intellectual woman, she might more appealingly have chosen a clod or a sprite as a permanent male companion, someone providing Passion and Otherness in the masculine manner, who would have given emotional support and not gotten in the way of her personal glory in her chosen field. Many creative men and some creative women have certainly done this—but Beauvoir was not a self-sustaining artist. Or she could have joined up with a great physicist or a great cellist and kept her own enterprise to a separate standard in a separate world. By hitching her feminine intellectual's fate to the career of a prominent philosopher, she risked losing her independent identity as a thinker; and she did, in fact, lose it. She is often called one of the foremost intellectuals and literary figures of her day, a leader, but in those respects her name is never mentioned without Sartre's. She is perceived as a part of his intellectual group and not separately, the way Camus is. Sartre, of course, is easily thought of independently of her.

Her novels and her memoirs are all alternative expository versions of her life, and that meant her life with Sartre. Only *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, published in 1958, which deals very movingly with Beauvoir's childhood and youth before she met him, can claim independent importance as a memoir; and Bair says that it evoked almost as much response from French women as *The Second Sex* had done. But the others do not transcend the complex trap of her fell attachment, interesting and informative as they are. Her thinking, her political and editorial work, her philosophy, her fiction, her other love affairs were all contained by the larger connection with Sartre, which organized her life and produced the reasons, the enabling conditions, the necessary opposition, even when she was far from him.

Only with her inspired applications of his philosophy to her original study of women did Beauvoir find her separate universe and create a work that stands outside him, and finally outside herself. It is the only book in which she makes a large imaginative leap out of her own circumstances; that's why it's so extreme, so repetitious, so stumbling, so crude by comparison to some of her other productions. It is a great work because it is detachable enough to immortalize her. Everything else is stuck inside her personal myth, with no life of its own. *The Second Sex* for once has no single woman at the center, being or standing for her superior self: *all* women form the group she is trying to join, and on equal terms.

Unlike the feminist literature that followed it, *The Second Sex* is not a detailed program for the future; it only shows the need for one. It was the first discussion that minutely described the ways in which women have willingly placed themselves in the role of Object, sharing (often with profit) in masculine myths of the Other. Beauvoir articulated the process by which women, by agreeing to live in comfort inside the fantasies of men, put themselves in a permanently false position.

They help to create a world, she wrote, where men are forever feeling betrayed, not supported, by the true character and the quality of women, because when fantasy is governing perception, the truth appears as a blasphemy. Neutral facts about women are perceived by men, and by women themselves, not as welcome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THE MAN AND HIS FAMILY
Joseph Frazier Wall
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

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illuminations but as bad news, festering blemishes on the lovely structure that both sexes agree is woman's proper moral and physical shape. Men need the structure and try to force its preservation; but they also feel entitled to hate the rituals of fakery that women perform to maintain it, especially when they fail. Women in such a world feel chronically in the wrong, most acutely wrong in moments when the truth of the self betrays the fantasy, but obscurely wrong in essence for consenting to the fantasy in the first place. Woman as Object may be spared the burden of responsibility carried by primary Subjects only by suffering the dishonor of constant two-way self-betrayal. Much heavier burdens and worse sufferings then follow, as women are given and often meekly accept every form of raw deal in punishment for representing falsity and moral weakness.

The sophistication of Beauvoir's account gave her book a lasting resonance, but her brisk solutions of 1949 were too simple for the way that history was going. In her book she expressed hope for women only in the abolition of marriage, which would naturally follow upon the abolition of capitalism; independent female work would create independent female self-awareness along with economic freedom, followed by universal respect for women's autonomy. But as the cold war progressed and the revolution of 1968 burst out and reverberated, she clearly saw that women were left unfree by the sort of political upheaval she thought would redeem them. Women were still making coffee, not policy. Although she continued to maintain that "a Feminist is a Leftist" and kept her own left-wing position, she also understood that after 1968 many radical women, finding themselves effectively sidelined by the revolution, needed a feminist movement that was independent of ordinary radical politics. It became clear that unless sexual politics acquired its own left and its own radicalization, the liberation of women could not be achieved by ordinary political means. The leadership of such a movement she gladly put in the hands of others. During the twenty years of later feminism that she lived through, she did not write a sequel.

She did, however, work hard for women. As feminism gradually took over much of Beauvoir's energy in the seventies, her attentions to Sartre diminished; the care of him and his ideas was shared with others. In Bair's account, Sartre seems glad that she had something to amuse her while he was busy with his book on Flaubert, who didn't appeal to her; or with the new philosophical ideas he pursued after *The Critique of Dialectical Reason* in 1960, which she deplored and rejected because they repudiated what he had achieved in 1943 in *Being and Nothingness*, and therefore betrayed the essential Sartre; or with the many left-wing groups in which her own interest had begun to wane. But she still dropped everything to travel with him when he followed The Revolution all over the globe, and only incidentally acknowledged her own growing feminist fame in those same places. In all her interviews with Bair, she stuck to Sartre's pre-eminence as the original mind and saw herself mainly as the constant writer, the busy *castor*, rather as if writing were housekeeping, which it clearly was for her, an exercise in the mental cleaning up of untidy experience, a form of understanding and not a detached creative act.

So it was with Beauvoir's celebrated affair with Nelson Algren, and it finally drove him off. Their strong trans-Atlantic passion lasted a long time and gave both of them great satisfaction, before her rage to write about it ruined it forever. It also redressed the balance a bit between her and Sartre, whose many liaisons cumbered their life with heavy emotional furniture that constantly needed dusting and shifting, often by her novelistic method. Algren really loved Beauvoir and wanted her to move to America to be with him permanently; but she persisted in fitting him into her governing plan with Sartre, and she couldn't understand why he couldn't understand that. She also actually published one of his love letters, and still she did not know what made him so angry. She kept him as a friend and informant, however, with all her genius for preserving relationships, and she wore his ring until her death.

What Algren couldn't know, apart from the terms of her peculiar arrangement with Sartre, was how much she was part of a wholly French literary and intellectual tradition, something only occasionally echoed in America and not transportable. To go and live in America she would not only have to give up her philosopher and her language, she would have to become a different person. Only in Paris (and in French) could she live in public as a full-time professional intellectual, interpreting political developments and literary movements, sifting and considering current events and historical moments according to abstract ideas, undertaking to apply a refined apparatus of educated thought and principle to everyday occurrences and register the results—and, very important, to conduct this daily life of the mind not only in essays, plays, and novels, but in conversations, in cafés, in a crowd, in active politics, and in constant full view. It wouldn't have been the same in Chicago among the lowlife Algren liked.

The daily life of Beauvoir and Sartre in their great days in the late 1940s sounds like the prolongation into maturity of urban Student Life (before the days of multisex residence halls), when nobody has any money or a real apartment, some live with their parents, and people sleep in marginal furnished rooms. Lovers and friends and followers leave their cramped quarters to spend hours and hours in coffee shops, talking and talking, meeting and parting, grouping and regrouping, conniving and intriguing, writing and thinking in each other's company, and incidentally eating and drinking, when finances permit. No bourgeois domesticity whatsoever, but an unrooted state of perpetual adolescence. Beauvoir and Sartre moved from hotel to hotel, each in a different single room, or Sartre lived with his mother, and real life and work went on for years at a sequence of café tables, or occasionally on the barricades. Later in the 1950s and after, they did have apartments that were often uncomfortable and ill-equipped, although Beauvoir's last one was fairly grand, acquired on the proceeds of the Prix Goncourt.

She won the prize in 1954 for *The Mandarins*, an enormous novel about the problems of urban intellectuals in a post-war world. She showed how the politics of thoughtful people, though originally founded on clear principles and high ideals, lose all hope of purity in the aftermath of a war tainted with collaboration and blackened by the Holocaust. Memory is haunted by deaths that occurred through the slimy betrayals of friends, not just at the clean hands of enemy troops, and all political thought is clogged by a troubling lust for reprisals. Meanwhile politics are swiftly polarizing, and the need for self-defining action is immediate. Beauvoir dramatized the conflict between the writer's own impulse (pictured as unworthy) to withdraw from the mess and write for posterity with a clear head, and the pressure on the writer to banish his fastidious detachment and join the fray to save his soul.

These problems are not confined to that particular moment in history, of course, and the novel generates real excitement. It also has constant fast dialogue, many changes of scene, a touch of violence, a thread of sentimentality, and some intermittent sex: it reads like a screenplay for an endless television series. Alternating with the intellectual dilemma is the personal struggle of the central female character; although the

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novel otherwise depends on an omniscient narrator, this main woman's part is rendered in the first person, so that we are left in no doubt about her finer brand of insight and honesty. Other women respond to pressure by vamping every man, selling out, going mad, or turning perversely self-destructive: our heroine may weep a lot, but she keeps her objective stance, her sexual dignity, and her ability to speak the truth. And most of all, you see, she really understands men. Beauvoir makes the character a psychiatrist, so that this version of herself even has a license for her superior knowledge of others, her self-control, her irritating tolerance. She also has a true love and real work, unlike the other women in the book, and a healthy sexual appetite. By using the first person to convey this paragon, Beauvoir makes the novel judiciously self-aggrandizing, and compromises her excellent perception of male points of view, to say nothing of other female ones.

American responses to the spectacle of Sartre and Beauvoir include a certain irritation at their sense of their own importance, their belief in themselves as the center of the thinking world. It could seem quite true in the Paris they inhabited, soundproofed as they were inside their coterie and able to hear only the immediate resonance of all their own remarks, even to each other. Behind their Parisian tableau at the Café de Flore stretched the long history of French intellectual life, back to the realm of the *salons* and the *philosophes*, the tradition of enlightened discussion and educated, dynamic exchange that continued in the later Parisian worlds of Balzac and George Sand, Baudelaire and Zola, all mounting barricades and sitting at café tables, too. Supporting it all was the general legacy of French culture to which Sartre and Beauvoir were conscious and honorable heirs, however modern their immediate concerns and however unconventional their personal association. They could justly feel themselves candidates for lasting importance, at least Parisian importance, and at least while they sat there.

Beauvoir's own importance as a writer is compromised by her careless prolixity, by the steady rush of unedited utterance that floods across the barriers between fiction, philosophy, and memoir. With all her crisp intelligence, she still piles up loose heaps of prose in an attempt to tell many truths at once, collapsing boundaries with great urgency but insufficient art. There is a conspicuous lack of poetic compression in her work. Her excessive, serious, confidential mode of writing gives an emotional cast to her whole career as a woman of letters, and it conveys the poignant conflicts that may hamper a modern woman's creative work. Beauvoir embodies a tension between detached creative thought and personal creative feeling that many women find hard to manage, now that they are trying to be honest female thinkers and not just to follow all the right male models. She is a great witness to female experience; but a lack of rigorous self-editing finally keeps her out of the writer's pantheon. She preferred to turn her editorial forces on Sartre's efforts, to make sure that he got there instead.

Bair's book is packed with information, a monumental example of excellent organization and responsible apparatus. The sustained personal tone, established from the start by her description of six years of interviews with Beauvoir, gives an agreeable unifying texture to this long, detailed story. Bair is perpetually discovering this remarkable woman and explaining her to us, responding throughout to Beauvoir's behavior and feelings, both directly as they talked and indirectly, as Beauvoir presented herself in her writings and appeared through the eyes of other informants and writers.

The book is designed as a sort of corrective to the subtly cooked memoirs, an emendation partly elicited from Beauvoir herself, whom Bair reports as eager for the exercise. All the chapters and the many notes, while describing biographical events quite impartially, are nevertheless punctuated with references to what Beauvoir said directly to Bair about the events in question, and how she seemed to feel about what she said. The overall effect is successful: you feel that you know the woman better than she knew herself, and you're glad to get past the rebarbative, humorless image she seemed deliberately to project.

The trouble is, you also feel you know Bair better than she might like. Without any overemphasis, Bair very properly writes this book as a feminist, and she makes us conscious that she is a woman dealing with another woman's career in the light of modern feminism—a sister, not just a detached biographer dealing with a writer's life. But there is another side to it all. In the process, Bair is unfortunately exposed as a writer who is herself not so profoundly devoted to language as her subject was. Her temporary intimacy with Beauvoir, combined with attentive and copious reading in French and English and an excellent sense of structure, simply cannot make up for what comes through as an unseemly level of linguistic carelessness, in a book about a fundamentally classical writer.

Solecisms are the more noticeable if repeated, and this is a long book. She uses "flaunt" for "flout" not once but four times, and "centered around" on nearly a dozen occasions. "Imprecation" is used twice incorrectly to mean "exhortation," and "equivocation" incorrectly to mean "ambivalence." Phrases such as "equally as important" (twice) and "they accepted to believe in it" are not acceptable, nor is the sentence, "I did not disavow her of this idea." She uses "mutual" to mean "common," "symposia" as a singular, and "cower" as a transitive verb. I promise to refrain from further examples, except to object to a vague desire to seem literary that produces the frequent use of "within," when "in" would be right.

Bair's display of a shaky extended vocabulary in English raises doubts about her relation to language altogether. Her ear for French may be less good than one would hope and her ear for French civilization may be somewhat questionable in consequence, although she covers her tracks very well. She leaves no glaring misconstructions or mistranslations, only a lingering mistrust; all those flaws in diction give an ill-educated impression. They suggest that despite her intelligence and level-headedness, and great skill in molding huge amounts of diverse material into readable paragraphs, this American writer cannot take the complete measure of her highly cultivated French subject.

Meanwhile there is ample reason to be grateful for this book. One of the best sections deals with the process by which *The Second Sex* found its American publisher and its English translator, a story of dreadful, semicomic transcultural misunderstanding, and of heroic labor. The lengthy and devoted undertaking of H. M. Parshley, the zoology professor who made the only English translation of the book and edited it for an American

Night Train

Moths go over and over the glass,
puffs of French chalk,
like someone checking for finger prints.

Between two barbed wire fences,
on the verge of the underworld,
the train is arrested. Irrevocable

as a declaration of love,
this silent, stolen masterpiece,
this aching gallery of gilded light,

and now we would like it to leave.

CRAIG RAINE

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public, makes a tale in itself—one with an unhappy ending, since his name never got on the jacket, he was paid very little, and he literally died of the effort. He was a privileged white male scientist, not an oppressed woman; but it was his sustained belief in the value of *The Second Sex* that ensured its early fame among the English-speaking public.

Bair's detailed story of Beauvoir's and Sartre's activities during and after the war is very welcome, with its exact elucidation of the parts that they played in the Resistance and the Occupation, and in all their lengthy, sometimes dubious political involvements. Bair is extremely good at sorting out rumors and their sources, tracking down and synthesizing alternative statements and explanations to form a believable, coherent whole out of a great deal of confusion. With all her sympathy she does not spare or excuse her subject, and she therefore seems trustworthy about the unpalatable elements of Beauvoir's life and character, which Beauvoir herself glossed over in her self-examinations. These include her often embarrassing abrasive manners and occasional displays of cruelty, along with the lame behavior that seemed to verge on collaboration during the war. On the other hand, Bair is quick to scotch malign reports if she can prove them wrong, and the inexpert reader comes away with the comforting sense of having a true account.

Bair's book deftly rescues Beauvoir from herself, wrenching her right out of her heavy French frame. The reader can't help being affected by the author's rapt attention to this twentieth-century ancient monument; Bair's youthful amazement at Beauvoir's actual humanity is catching. Along with all the facts, she renders Beauvoir's vivid memory for fifty-year-old humiliations, her fits of anger and amusement, her brusqueness, her vagueness, her devotion to strong drink, and her tendency to self-deception, all with a sort of affectionate piety and wonder. And she makes us see her plainly and feel for her sharply, as she follows Beauvoir through her long, fierce, moving, and radically exemplary woman's life.

ANNE HOLLANDER is the author most recently of *Moving Pictures* (Knopf).

Party Animal

BY EDWARD N. LUTTWAK

Fighting for Peace: Seven Critical Years in the Pentagon by Caspar Weinberger

(Warner Books, 464 pp., $24.95)

There is rich irony in Caspar Weinberger's constant evocations of Winston Churchill as his guide and his exemplar in all things military and strategic. (His book proudly records that his lifelong veneration began at the age of twelve, when he read the first volume of *The World Crisis*.) For, in spite of the Churchilliana that decorated his speeches and his documents, Weinberger was most un-Churchillian in his seven years as secretary of defense.

To begin with a small matter: in sharp contrast to Churchill's scorn for the sanctity of military traditions ("rum, buggery, and the lash" was his famous rendition of the Royal Navy's patrimony) and his impatience with ceremonial (in wartime his visits to the troops were dreaded, because it was combat that he wanted to see, not parades), Weinberger's attitude to traditions and trappings was never less than devotional. In this book he takes five pages to record the minute details of a Congressional Medal of Honor award to a deserving sergeant. The president did the honors in fine style, before a huge crowd, in a ceremony arranged in an exceptionally elaborate fashion. Weinberger claims that such gestures had a favorable impact on enlistments and morale, and his claim need not be doubted; but the argument rationalizes an insatiable appetite for military pomp and ceremony that did wonders for the status of protocol officers in any command he happened to visit.

One of Weinberger's first acts in office was to demand the continuous attendance of two servicemen in full-dress uniform outside his office door. One of his last acts was to arrange an elaborate passing-out parade for himself, complete with a long fly-past that may have seriously depleted the Pentagon's stock of jet fuel, and that certainly disrupted traffic at Washington's airport for several hours. Word soon got around among our allies that the secretary's generosity was easily stimulated by arrival ceremonies with full-dress troop reviews, the largest possible band, and the bestowal of medals and insignia to the honored guest. The British exploited this weakness shamelessly, at the end with a knighthood; he is Sir Caspar in Hong Kong, and wherever else the Britannic Majesty still reigns.

More substantively, Churchill was a relentless critic of the professional military of his day in matters large and small, ever watchful against their tendency to remain captive to outdated traditions, obsolete conceptions of warfare, and narrow one-service views. Weinberger, by contrast, accepted as sacrosanct every bureaucratic stance of the armed services on matters strategic or operational. (In his book he recites once again the Navy's catechism about the sacred obligation to be fruitful and multiply aircraft carriers.) He silenced all internal criticisms and denounced all outside critics as politically motivated, if not plain disloyal. When Admiral Robert J. Long's commission on the Marine disaster in Beirut uncovered an abundance of operational and tactical incompetence urgently in need of correction, Weinberger still failed to see the need for reforms that might save other Americans from more such disasters, and was (as he admits in this book) most unhappy with that commission's criticisms of officers up and down the chain of command.

Churchill's critical disposition was the source of his energetic reformism, starting at the Admiralty and culminating with the formation of the Ministry of Defense in his final year of office forty years later. Weinberger, for his part, never recognized that the inherent conservatism of military institutions requires frequent interventions from above. During the Carter-Reagan transition, Weinberger flatly refused to consider the possibility that, in addition to more money, the Pentagon might need reform to rationalize procurement (no more Air Force toothbrushes) and unify command structures (no more Iran-rescue fiascoes, planned and executed by multiservice jamborees).

In the end, it was congressional staff aides and outside experts who had to draft the minute details of the sweepingly comprehensive Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reform Act, unassisted by Weinberger or the Pentagon, filled though it was with officers and officials who fully agreed that reform was urgent. Having lost much political capital by ab-

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surdly insisting that the system was perfect and incapable of improvement—"If it ain't broke, don't fix it," he told Goldwater, who immediately lost all respect for him—Weinberger would not let the Pentagon's own reform-minded denizens participate in the drafting of the act, which might have been further improved by their collaboration. Likewise, although the persistent failures of American commando forces had revealed the need for organizational change, Weinberger's answer was to give them much more money while refusing all structural reform (which once again had to be imposed by Congress, this time with greater errors caused by the denial of expert advice).

Always willing to consort at length with scientists and outside experts, never dissuaded by the predictable service opposition to new ideas, Churchill was also a great technical innovator: he imposed the tank on the horse-loving British army, and radar for air defense on the bomber-fixated Royal Air Force. As one of the few Americans of his age and background who appear to be fundamentally uninterested in weapons and warfare (that is, in the substance within the forms he reveres), it probably never occurred to Weinberger to emulate his hero by seeking out new technical ideas.

To lack such a proclivity is no crime; but Weinberger's deference to the services meant that other civilian officials could not promote innovation either. Abundant research-and-development funds were simply given to the services, which in turn handed them over to their preferred contractors to further embellish their preferred "platforms": tanks and infantry vehicles for the Army, manned combat aircraft for the Air Force, warships for the Navy. These essentially pre-1945 devices achieved the elaboration of High Baroque churches, while money remained very scarce for newer concepts that did offer scope for important advances. For the service bureaucrats, however, those concepts were more threatening than the Russians: pilotless aircraft for the Air Force, crewless tank-killers for the Army, remote ship-killers for the Navy, and so on.

Still, there was genuine innovation, in the SDI program. SDI funds would not provide an astrodome over an abortion-free America, but they seriously advanced important technologies (high-speed computing, miniaturization, lasers) simply because some of the money was given to small new companies with brains, instead of being wholly captured by high-overhead contractors with more lobbyists than scientists. Weinberger devotes a chapter to SDI in his book, recounting his loyal support of the president in this matter as well. (There are turgid asseverations of loyalty to Reagan throughout the book, beginning with a full chapter on Weinberger and the assassination attempt.) But Weinberger admits that neither he nor his officials had any part in formulating the SDI policy—even though it had radical implications for both the Atlantic alliance and nuclear strategy, that is, for nine-tenths of the strategy that Weinberger fondly imagined he was in charge of. Clearly Reagan did not care to ask for Weinberger's advice before announcing SDI to the world, and neither did he believe in reciprocating a dogged loyalty with the common courtesy of keeping his secretary of defense informed. ("Only my friendship with ... Bill Clark and Ed Meese enabled me to know what they were working on.")

Weinberger duly vents his indignation at the White House staff, Reagan being miraculously exempted, as always. Yet he does not pause to reflect on the implications of what he writes. Why did SDI's promoters have to circumvent the Pentagon? Why did they have to form an alliance with Edward Teller (who promptly took all the credit) to reach the president by a backstairs intrigue? The reason, of course, is that Weinberger's door was barred to outsiders with new ideas. During Weinberger's time, appointments with people who might have provided independent, non-service advice were invariably referred to his military assistants, who were hardly the ones to pass on new ideas opposed by their service chiefs. (SDI was, and is, opposed by the services, for its devices have no cockpits for Air Force pilots, no admiral's cabins for the Navy, no command posts for Army generals.)

Perhaps Weinberger imagines that his strenuous seven-year fight to obtain every possible cent from Congress makes him a true disciple of his hero. True, Churchill often called for more military expenditures than his colleagues favored (though it was he, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, who imposed the notorious "Ten Year Rule" in 1923). But Churchill also insisted that the civilian heads of military departments were there to do the spending, to impose some sort of strategic rationality on uniformed bureaucracies and their divergent priorities. That also happens to be the job description of the secretary of defense of the United States.

It is a hard job. Money must be allocated in a temporal dimension (for immediate "readiness," or for the purchase of weapons for the near future, or for

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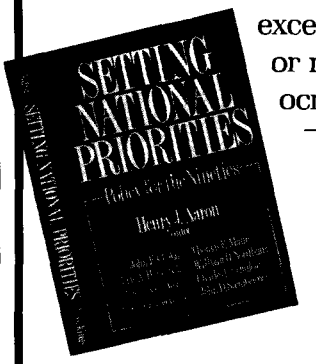

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research and development for the more distant future), and in a functional dimension (strategic-nuclear, tactical air power, ground strength, and so on), as well as by services (most functions are performed by more than one). And then a host of specific choices must be made inside each category, and also between them (missile X or missile Y? any missile at all, or more training for the Marines?). To make this myriad of bitterly controverted decisions, Weinberger's predecessors and successors have toiled very long hours in the hope of avoiding at least the most egregious mistakes in spending the taxpayers' money.

Weinberger himself must have wondered what all the fuss was about. During his Pentagon years, one could hardly attend a Washington social gathering without running into him, unless he had flown off for one more visit to the blessed isle. (The Caspar Weinbergers must hail from Shropshire—unlike all other Weinbergers, who come from Judea mostly by way of Polish Galicia.) Foreign ambassadors of the socialite persuasion simply adored the secretary; unlike all other Pentagon chiefs, who would always plead that they were overworked, Weinberger accepted almost every invitation, came early, and left late.

Despite his angry denials in this book, Weinberger did make the funding of the Pentagon his only serious concern and left the spending—the hard part—largely to others. All his predecessors had assembled a spending staff under whatever name and then laid down evaluation procedures more or less elaborate. That is how strategy is made, not by grandiloquent words but by a mosaic of modestly coherent budget allocations. When Weinberger arrived, all in the Pentagon awaited the details on the spending system he would establish. After seven years they were still waiting. Only John Lehman, the brash young secretary of the Navy, and himself a genuine expert, knew better: he immediately understood that there would be no system under Weinberger, only a free-for-all. The Navy was the gainer, as Lehman jumped in to grab as much money as possible from the start.

Now that so many quarrels have become actionable in this litigious country, we may yet see a citizens' class action suit against Weinberger for having allowed the unsupervised spending of the taxpayers' dollars by the trillion. If that comes to pass, this book will serve as Exhibit A. So lawyerly a man would not provide evidence of malfeasance. But the entire book testifies to non-feasance.

The secretary of defense is not paid to serve as the full-time opponent and part-time media critic of the secretary of state and the president's national security adviser. Nor is he employed to travel overseas on frequent private as well as public errands. Certainly he does not accomplish his duties by acting as the Cabinet groupie of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Of thirteen chapters, eight—on Grenada, Lebanon, Libya, the Falklands, American-Japanese relations, China, Iran-contra, and the Persian Gulf—are mainly devoted to uncritical accounts of episodes of combat, which is fair enough; but their real point is to record Weinberger's chronic disagreements with Alexander Haig, George Shultz, Robert McFarlane, and others on matters of foreign policy. Two more chapters (on the transition and the defense budget) focus on the funding battles with Stockman as well as Congress. There is not a single chapter on defense policy, that is, on spending—that is, on the job that Weinberger was hired to do.

Today the defense budget is in sharp decline. The expensively launched projects of the Weinberger years must be cut while they are still uselessly incomplete, or kept going at the expense of the manpower accounts. Weinberger certainly cannot be faulted for not having foreseen the transformation of Soviet policy that now allows the drastic reduction of defense expenditure. Indeed, the vigor of the American rearmament that he helped to promote may well be credited by future historians as the precipitating factor in the sudden change in Moscow. Still, even before Gorbachev, it was perfectly clear to all competent observers that the multiplicity of new defense projects initiated under Weinberger could not be funded by any foreseeable peacetime budget. Now it is primarily the patriotic and well-meaning members of the armed forces who must pay the price for the seven years in the Pentagon that Caspar Weinberger so heartily enjoyed.

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK is the author most recently of *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Harvard University Press).

Varieties of Mysticism

BY MOSHE HALBERTAL

Kabbalah: New Perspectives
by Moshe Idel
(Yale University Press, 419 pp., $45, $16.95 paper)

Studies in Ecstatic Kabbalah
by Moshe Idel
(State University of New York Press, 160 pp., $44.50, $14.95 paper)

The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia
by Moshe Idel
(State University Press of New York, 240 pp., $44.50, $14.95 paper)

Kabbalah is the name of the esoteric tradition of Jewish mysticism. It stretches from the literature of the *Hekhalot*, or the divine palaces, which has been dated as early as the second century, to the Hasidic movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This long tradition—it was first and most broadly mapped by Gershom Scholem, notably in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, which appeared in 1941—is not exactly cohesive; it is riddled with departures and transformations. The earliest Kabbalistic literature describes the perilous mystical journey, past gates guarded by seraphim, to the celestial chambers, and culminates in the exalted contemplation of God seated on his throne. After the completion of this literature, however, and until the twelfth century, the history of the Kabbalah is, well, shrouded in mystery; and the scholarly reconstruction of those silent centuries is one of the most difficult tasks of Kabbalistic research.

In the twelfth century, the Kabbalah was suddenly "revealed" again, in an explosion of intellectual and spiritual creativity, first in Provence, then in Catalo-

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nia and Castile. From then on, one of the central preoccupations of the Kabbalah was the articulation of God as a network of attributes, known as *sephirot*, which are linked to one another in a branched arrangement of emanation and influence. The initial outlines of this theosophy are found in *Sefer Ha-Bahir* (The Bahir Book), one of the most obscure texts of early Kabbalah, which was composed in Provence in the early twelfth century. The development of this theosophy reached its peak in the thirteenth century in Spain, with the creation of the Kabbalah's canonical text, the Zohar. The collection of texts that make up the Zohar—all of them pseudo-epigraphically ascribed to Rabbi Simeon bar Yochai, the great radical sage of second-century Palestine—is generally considered to be the most profound and the most wondrous expression of mysticism in Judaism. It is not a systematic exposition of theosophical doctrine, but a mystical commentary on the Five Books of Moses, the Song of Songs, and the Book of Ruth. This commentary created the symbolic vocabulary of the Kabbalah.

The account of the Godhead in Kabbalistic theosophy stands in stark opposition to the account of the Godhead in biblical tradition. The creation story in Genesis says nothing whatever about the creation of the Godhead itself, or about the struggle of God with primal forces prior to the creation of the world. In the biblical account, God already exists, and creates the world not out of struggle, but freely, as an act of his unconditioned will, by means of his pronouncements. The theosophy of the Kabbalah, by contrast, attempts to account for the creation of God from within himself. The first chapter of Genesis is mystically interpreted as the story of the emanation of divine powers from nothingness. God's faculties flow from the hidden aspect of God, known as the Ein-Sof (the Endless, "outside of which there is nothing"). When they reveal themselves, they take the form of the *sephirot*, the active powers of the divine, which enjoy complicated relations of giving and receiving, of tension and sympathy.

One of the most significant tensions between the *sephirot*—that is, within the structure of the Godhead—takes place between the attribute of Judgment, which is the divine aspect that establishes limits and boundaries, and the attribute of Love, which represents the endless and unlimited bounty of God. This contradiction encompasses the contradiction between good, which originates in the attribute of Love, and evil, which originates in the attribute of Judgment. Again, the difference with the biblical account is dramatic. The God of the Bible is one and transcendent; the God of the Kabbalah is characterized by an inner multiplicity, even an inner turmoil. The Kabbalistic difference represents a profound dissatisfaction with the ideal unity that the tradition had imposed on the contradictions of reality.

The symbols that reveal the inner life of the deity, moreover, are incontrovertibly mythic ones—for example, those that distinguish between the masculine and the feminine aspects of God. The Zohar is rich in daring images and does not flinch from describing the relations between the various *sephirot* in erotic terms. The ninth *sephirah*, known as Yesod, or "the foundation of the world," is pictured phallically and is deemed to be responsible for the "Divine coupling" with the female Shekhinah, which is actually the tenth *sephirah*, through which the flow of God's abundance is transmitted to the world.

What is the role of man in all this? It is to secure the unity of this teeming divine structure. This, to put it mildly, is a daunting task; for there exists, alongside the internal divisions of the Godhead, a permanent pressure within the Godhead to withdraw entirely. The Kabbalistic theosophy has the *sephirot* longing for the numinous nothingness from which they came, agitating to turn the process of emanation back on itself and retire to the source. Thus the Godhead stands in constant danger of severance from itself and from the world. Man's part is to prevent such a severance; and he accomplishes this by fulfilling the commandments of the Torah. In this way, the law-giving God of the Bible becomes unexpectedly dependent on the observance of the law. This dependence transforms the observance of the law from obedience to God's will into a theurgic activity: the fulfillment of the commandments affects the cosmos, affects God.

Man, in this conception, comes to pull the strings of this vast cosmic machine. The vast distance that separates him from God in the Bible vanishes in the Kabbalah. He becomes responsible for the equilibrium within the Godhead, for the delicate divine balance that is always on the verge of upsetting itself, and he secures the affinity between God and the world that keeps the world in existence. The Kabbalistic texts describe this relationship of dependence sharply, even in corporeal and erotic terms. Moshe Idel cites a fine, late thirteenth-century example of this spiritual boldness:

> For when the lower man blemishes one of his limbs . . . it is as if he cuts the corresponding supernal limb. And the meaning of this cutting is that the limb is cut, and becomes more and more contracted, and is gathered to the depths of being, called nothingness, as if that limb is missing above. For when the human form is perfect below, it brings about perfection above; [in the same manner] the impurity of the limb below causes the gathering of that supernal limb into the depths of nothingness, so as to blemish the supernal form, as it is written [Isaiah 57:1]"Because of the evil, the righteous is taken away"—taken away, literally.

In these bold notions of the meaning of divinity and ritual, and in their spectacular departure from the monotheistic traditions of Scripture, Scholem saw a return of the repressed. What had been repressed, in Judaism, was myth; and the Kabbalah, according to Scholem, was the revenge of myth upon Jewish tradition. By way of the Kabbalah, myth was re-

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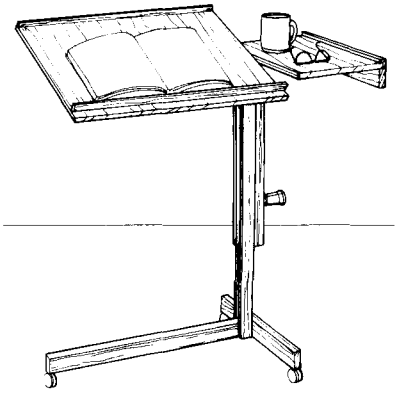

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stored, draped in mystery, to the heart of Judaism; and it came to represent, for many believing Jews, the climax of Judaism. As Scholem wrote in his essay on Kabbalah and myth, "The lives and actions of the Kabbalist were a revolt against a world which consciously they never wearied of affirming. And this of course led to deep-seated ambiguities."

Was the Kabbalah really a reaction to the suppression of myth in Judaism? Did the Jewish tradition really suppress myth? Or might it be more correct to say, in the light of the Kabbalah, that the biblical and rabbinic traditions always included mythical elements, which the Kabbalah merely enlarged upon? This question—it is really about nothing less than the character of the Jewish religion—is one of the many questions raised by Moshe Idel's extraordinary studies, particularly by *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, a book that delivers what its subtitle promises. It is the most exciting and important work on the Kabbalah since Scholem's own.

In Scholem's view, fundamental concepts of Judaism such as revelation, creation, and redemption were passed through the fire of Jewish mysticism and forged anew; and the Kabbalah's bold transformation of these concepts was an escape from Judaism's narrow self-definition as an ethical monotheism or a system of ritual. Scholem concluded from his study of the history of the Kabbalah that there is no a priori Judaism, that Judaism is a historical process whose outcome is not defined at its outset. Just as the gates of Kabbalistic interpretation are never shut, neither are the gates of Jewish spirituality. The character of Judaism is determined, rather, by the creativity of the Jews.

Scholem, as is well known, was the founding father of modern Kabbalistic research. His work combined a vast knowledge of detail with a remarkable conceptual grasp of the whole. A product of German culture, his methods were historical and philological, and the terms into which he translated his arcane material also had deep roots in the idealism and the romanticism of his German background. Unlike some of his predecessors, for whom the Kabbalah was merely a collection of outrageous fantasies that deserved no place in the intellectual history of the Jews, Scholem read its texts empathetically. His aim was to penetrate the Kabbalistic picture of the world in order to arrive at the human condition that these myths expressed, and at the power of these myths to anchor the lives of Jews. For Scholem, who was alive to the limits of reason, the Kabbalah was too serious a matter to be dismissed as superstition.

Scholem, who died in 1983, set the agenda of Kabbalistic research for the generation of scholars that followed him. Many of them were his students (including Idel). The important contributions to the study of the Kabbalah that they produced were based on Scholem's assumptions and were faithful to his picture. For that reason, Idel's work has come as a shock. The prolific Idel seems to show that the very character of the Kabbalah, and the basic outlines of its evolution, have not yet been settled. Idel presents a different picture, in large and in small; and it is an impressive one. It was no wonder, given the intensity of the identification of Kabbalistic study with the methods and the categories of Scholem, that a virulent controversy has surrounded Idel. His work has provoked angry accusations that he has set out, almost Oedipally, to depose Scholem, to attack him personally. The insinuations, to put it mildly, are unworthy.

Scholem established the canonical image of the Kabbalah in three ways. First, he gave a definition of Jewish mysticism, and of its difference from other mysticisms. Second, he provided the Kabbalah with a historical logic, and produced a complete account of the internal evolution of Jewish mysticism in all its forms. Third, he conceived of the Kabbalah not only as an esoteric form of religion with an inner history, but also as a powerful historical force that was itself responsible for a number of significant changes in the life of the Jews; he was exercised by the impact of history on the Kabbalah and by the impact of the Kabbalah on history. Idel challenges Scholem on all three counts. He defines Jewish mysticism, and its development, and its relations with other forms of Jewish spirituality and with Jewish experience, altogether differently.

Scholem's definition of Jewish mysticism turned on two pivots: the absence from Jewish mysticism of the *unio mystica*, the mystical union, that is found in other mysticisms, and the centrality of symbolism. According to Scholem, the classical apotheosis of the mystic—his absorption into the Godhead and the consequent loss of his identity—is missing in Judaism. In his discussion of *devekut*, or the cleaving of the human to the divine, Scholem writes: "It is not union, because union with God is denied to men even in that mystical upsurge of the soul according to Kabbalistic theology. But it comes as near to union as a mystical interpretation would allow." The distance between God and man is never bridged: this was the limit that monotheism set for mysticism. And this limit, in Scholem's account, is one of the things that makes Jewish mysticism Jewish.

The symbol—the other defining feature of the Kabbalah—is understood by Scholem in opposition to the allegory. "If allegory can be defined as the representation of an expressible something by another expressible something, the mystical symbol is an expressible representation of something which lies beyond the sphere of representation." According to Scholem, what is symbolized cannot be expressed except by means of the symbol. The symbol is not a convention, a random or external container for a meaning; it is, instead, linked in its essence to what it symbolizes. Unlike the allegory, the symbol does not deliver information or ideas, it is a mirroring representation through which what is symbolized is intuitively grasped, in one look or not at all. In his preference for symbol over allegory, Scholem was a true son of German Romanticism. This preference allowed him to set Jewish mysticism against Jewish philosophy. The foremost representative of the "allegorical" philosophy that Scholem scanted was Maimonides. The male and female aspects of God, the Kabbalistic symbols par excellence, were for Maimonides allegories for the classical philosophical concepts of matter and form; allegories communicate meanings that can be captured clearly in concepts. In the contest that Scholem posited between philosophy and Kabbalah, it is easy to detect traces of the contest between the Enlightenment and Romanticism.

Idel disputes these claims. He believes that there is complete *devekut*, that there is total absorption, in Jewish mysticism. And he believes that the symbol is not the exclusive instrument of Kabbalistic instruction. His book is not a chronological account of the Kabbalah, but an exhaustive phenomenological analysis of the forms of Jewish mysticism. Idel's "phenomenology" has nothing to do with Husserl and his analysis of consciousness. It refers, rather, to his ahistorical method of study. Idel is interested not in the specific circumstances of the unfolding of Kabbalistic forms, but in their character as religious phenomena.

Idel discerns (to use Scholem's phrase) two major trends in Jewish mysticism: the ecstatic and the theosophic-theurgic. The ecstatic culminates in the complete unification of the human with the divine. This tradition of experiential, active, experimental mysticism is as old as the *Hekhalot* literature, and perhaps older; it flourished in the eleventh-century pietism of the Jewish communities in the Rhineland, which was known

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as the Hasidism of Ashkenaz, and then two centuries later in Spain, in the work of Abraham Abulafia; and it appeared in strength again in the Hasidic movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Idel shows, with breathtaking scholarship, that there are many testimonies to *unio mystica* in the Jewish tradition, and he discusses the different terminologies with which different Jewish mystics described the experience. There is, for example, the testimony of Rabbi Yehiel Michael of Zloczow, one of the early Hasidic masters:

> . . . this arrival being a union with the root and the root is the Ein-Sof; hence the branch is also the Ein-Sof, as its existence was annihilated as in the simile of the single drop which has fallen into the great sea, and arrived at its root, and hence is one with the water of the sea, so that it is totally impossible to recognize it per se.

The ecstatic strain, in Idel's view, is anthropocentric—that is, it is concerned with the individual mystic, with the means and the ends of his ascent to the divine. Those means, moreover, are a-nomic—that is, they have nothing to do with the fulfillment of the commandments and the observance of the law. Mystical union is owed, instead, to properly mystical techniques, such as the contemplation of colors, the spell of music, the regulation of breath. The mystical combination of Hebrew letters was one of the major techniques of Jewish mystical experience; one of the manuscripts adduced by Idel promises that "when he begins to practice the combination of letters in his solitariness he will feel fear and trembling and his hair will stand on end and his limbs will tremble."

The a-nomic character of the ecstatic's methods is revealing in another way. The ecstatic, after all, is an individualist. His epiphany is the epiphany of a single soul. Only in isolation can the mystical techniques lead to mystical union. Thus, the central figures in Idel's account—for example, Abraham Abulafia—were not members of the rabbinical establishments of their day. Abulafia was the most fertile and radical writer of the ecstatic Kabbalah; he actually called himself a prophet. His messianic activism included his trip to Rome in 1280, to meet Pope Nicholas III and hold him accountable for the sufferings of the Jews. (When Abulafia arrived in Rome the pope immediately sentenced him to death, but died before he could carry out the sentence.) These aspirations and agitations led to the banning of Abulafia by Rabbi Solomon ben Adret, the greatest rabbinic authority of the day. Abulafia's writings remained a center of controversy and were eventually overwhelmed by the more intellectualized Kabbalah that opposed him.

Against the ecstatic trend in Jewish mysticism stands the theosophic-theurgic trend. The objective of the theosophic-theurgic mystic is not union with the Godhead, but *tikkun*, or the mending of the fissures within the Godhead. This mystic does not wish to be absorbed into the divine, but to influence it. This mysticism is, therefore, theocentric: the fate of God, not the fate of the soul, is its subject. And the means to the theosophic-theurgic end are not a-nomic; quite the contrary, the mystic alters the condition of God by performing his commandments. Here Jewish law has theurgic power. The texts of this strain of Jewish mysticism, not surprisingly, are largely commentaries on prayers and laws, which explain the manner in which the liturgical and ritual formulas affect the higher reality. And some of the central figures of this mysticism, also not surprisingly, come out of the heart of the rabbinical establishment, not generally known for mystical tendencies; one of the most notable was Nahmanides (Moses ben Nahman, 1194-1270), a giant of Talmudism in Spain and a leader of the Spanish Jewish community.

Idel's most provocative claim is his insistence upon an *unio mystica* in Judaism. He wishes to shift the emphasis in the study of the Kabbalah toward this rich but largely unrecognized tradition of ecstasy and its techniques. His analysis also stands in stark contrast to Scholem's insistence upon the primacy of the symbol: the mediation of the symbol is no longer necessary when the gap between God and man is closed. According to Scholem, mystical union is impossible, and so there is no avenue of approach to the symbolized other than the symbol. According to Abulafia, by contrast, the various symbols of the *sephirot* were an expression only of the intellectual perplexity of the theosophists who, when asked to explain the names of the *sephirot* that they claimed to have "received from the prophets and the sages," found that they "were unable to say what these *sephirot* are and to what kind of entity these names refer."

What the two strains of the Kabbalah have in common is praxis. Indeed, in Idel's account, praxis is the defining characteristic of Jewish mysticism. In ecstatic Kabbalah, which is taken up with the attainment of a particular mystical state for a particular mystical soul, theory is obviously less important than practice. But in theosophic-theurgic Kabbalah, too, the elaboration of complex theosophic doctrine—of an entire body of eso-

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teric knowledge—was in the service of a practical end, in the service of spiritual action. Theosophy, or the study of God, was the instrument of theurgy, or the impact on God. Kabbalah is mystical praxis.

It is important to describe Idel's revisionism precisely. Scholem was certainly well aware of the ecstatic Kabbalah. He devoted an excellent chapter of *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* to the "prophetic Kabbalah" of Abulafia. He wrote about what he called "practical" Kabbalah, and its links with magic and theurgy. But there were certain conclusions that Scholem refused to draw from this material. He was immovable in his insistence that there was no mystical union in Judaism. Idel, with his vast erudition, is proposing an entirely new emphasis in the study of the Kabbalah: he proposes to admit the reality of *experience* in Jewish mysticism, and to inquire into its particular forms and methods.

Idel's revisionism extends beyond the analysis of the Kabbalah's forms to the analysis of its history. Scholem conceived of the history of the Kabbalah in dialectical terms. He traced intellectual developments that generated internal contradictions—a great, centuries-long drama of internal contradictions in which ideas, and mainly mythic ideas, brought about events that in turn influenced the development of ideas. For Scholem, the Kabbalah was the retort of myth to rabbinical and Talmudic Judaism. For the Bible and the Talmud put myth down—and so the stage for its dialectical return was set.

The Bible depicted God absolutely and forever separate from the world. And the Talmudic tradition vigilantly guarded the distinction between law and nature: man does not act in or on the world by means of the commandments, he merely complies with God's will, and God is the source of commandments that have no power to affect him. The theurgic myth of the Kabbalah conferred new significance on the commandments, Scholem observed, because it promoted them to cosmic acts. The explosion and the expansion of the Kabbalah in Provence and Spain in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries represented the rehabilitation of myth, the penetration of gnosis into the heart of Judaism, the expression of a crisis within monotheism.

In the sixteenth century, in the Galilean town of Safed, there occurred the next great manifestation of the Kabbalah, in the mysticism of Rabbi Isaac Luria. This, too, in Scholem's account, was a dialectical development. Luria's remarkable vocabulary of symbols was created in the wake of a great collective shock, the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal at the end of the fifteenth century. The first moment of the Lurianic myth was *tsimtsum*, or contraction: in order to create the world, God contracted himself, and into the space that remained his powers emanated, which began the bringing of the world into being. But there occurred a cosmic crisis, as the vessels that were created to contain the divine light failed to contain them, and shattered. The shattered vessels testified to the impaired nature of all of reality, to its need for redemption. This myth gave voice, in Scholem's view, to the deep pain of exile that Jews experienced in the wake of the expulsions from Iberia:

> It was the very boldness of this gnostic paradox—exile as an element in God himself—that accounted in large part for the enormous influence of these ideas among the Jews. Before the judgment seat of rationalist theology such an idea may not have much to say for itself. But for the human experience of the Jews it was the most powerful and seductively appropriate of symbols.

In Lurianic Kabbalah, then, the trauma of exile was made metaphysical, and raised into the trauma of God in exile from himself; and the emotional appropriateness of the myth accounted for its extraordinary proliferation throughout the Jewish world.

Then there followed the next stage of the Kabbalah's dialectical career: the messianic movement of Shabbetai Sevi in the seventeenth century, a movement that engulfed large numbers of Jewish communities and their leaders. A century earlier, Scholem argued, Lurianic Kabbalah had raised the eschatological temperature of Jewish life, and this fever culminated in Sabbatianism, which was one of the most profound spiritual and historical crises that Judaism has ever had to withstand. When the Jewish messiah converted to Islam in 1666, the Kabbalah was racked by internal contradictions of unprecedented severity. The messianic disappointment was followed by an outburst of libertinism, of extreme antinomian behavior; and the dangerous theology that characterized this crisis—the notion of "redemption through sin," that the exiled element of the divine could be reached and redeemed by transgression and lawlessness—was profoundly analyzed by Scholem. In the aftermath of Sabbatianism, in Scholem's scheme, Hasidism was born, and moderated and "neutralized" the messianic impulse; and even the Enlightenment was, according to Scholem, an indirect (that is, a dialectical) response to Sabbatianism.

Scholem was not a simple Hegelian; he did not speak of historical necessity, nor did he believe that his reading of history provided him with a key to the future. Still, the structure and the spirit of Scholem's reconstruction of the history of the Kabbalah was Hegelian. Idel will have none of this. He provides a completely different picture of Judaism's mystical past. He does not agree that the Kabbalah was an eruption of myth within a demythologized religion. He does not see mysticism as an anxious reaction to the rabbinism and the Talmudism that preceded it.

What troubles Idel is the swiftness of the Kabbalah's success. If Kabbalistic myth was largely a development of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as Scholem argues, how was it that this myth was so widely and so quickly accepted, not least by rabbinic leaders like Nahmanides? Maimonides, and the rationalism that he inspired, met with fierce opposition, but the opposition to the Kabbalah was slight. The ground for the Kabbalah seems to have been ready. Idel concludes, therefore, that Scholem was right to describe the Kabbalah as myth, but wrong to maintain that it flourished in a spiritual environment from which myth had been banished. He argues that the Kabbalistic myths of the Middle Ages were based in the rabbinic and Talmudic traditions; that the Kabbalah was not the intrusion of myth into a faith that lacked it, but the consistent growth of a faith that was imbued with mythical elements.

Idel thinks that theurgic notions are found already in the Talmud, that the rabbis also had the view that the sinner injures the deity and that the practice of the commandments strengthens God. The theurgy of the Kabbalah, in other words, had a precedent in the theurgy of the Talmud. And the ecstasy of the Kabbalah had a rabbinic precedent, too: the earliest *Hekhalot* writings describe the experience of the mystic's climb toward the celestial regions.

Scholem and Idel have different answers, then, to the riddle of the Kabbalah's success. For Scholem, the Kabbalah became widespread in the Jewish world despite the fact that it represented a revolution in the meaning of Judaism, and in some instances it prospered precisely because it was such a revolution. It triumphed because it gave satisfaction to powerful emotional needs in particular historical situations, needs that the traditional formulations had failed to satisfy. For Idel, by contrast, the success of the Kabbalah was owed to its unacknowledged, esoteric roots in the tradition, in the texts of the Talmud and perhaps

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even earlier; it was, in fact, an ancient traditional movement. The flowering of the Kabbalah in the Middle Ages, and its expansion among the spiritual elite of the Jewish people, was not a revolution, but a continuation.

This argument that there is no contradiction between the world of the mystics and the world of the rabbis does not assume only that the Kabbalah is much older than its texts. Finally Idel's work requires a revision of the conventional understanding of Talmudic Judaism. The antiquity of Jewish mysticism means, for Idel, that the Talmud and the midrash should be read in the light of the Kabbalah, and not the other way around. The distinction between myth and Judaism is weakened, if not collapsed. In this respect, Idel's "new perspectives" on the Kabbalah amount to new perspectives on Judaism itself. This mythologization of Talmud and midrash is fascinating. Still, it requires careful investigation on its own, apart from the matter of the proper understanding of the Kabbalah. Even if there are mythical elements in rabbinic texts, what is their place in the rabbinic universe? How important are they? And just how similar are the mythical elements of the Talmud to the mythical elements of the Kabbalah? Are the later ones really like the earlier ones, or are they new?

The Kabbalah of Isaac Luria, moreover, was not a reflection of the exile from Spain, according to Idel, nor was it responsible for the upheaval of Sabbatianism. Idel sees nothing unusually messianic in Lurianic Kabbalah; he notes the profoundly eschatological character of earlier Kabbalistic traditions, such as the Zohar. And he claims that Lurianic Kabbalah was not quite the popular phenomenon that Scholem described: it was familiar in its time only to a small and esoteric circle, and could hardly have stimulated a mass movement. The origins of Sabbatianism must be sought, instead, in the social and intellectual conditions of the time. For Idel, the Kabbalah was not a force of history, and it did not produce great changes in the historical reality of the Jews. It was the mystical praxis of an elite, a mystical praxis with a rich inner history.

Scholem, for all his revolt against the rationalism and the idealism of the modern German-Jewish tradition, remained loyal to that tradition in his demand that the spirit of Judaism be sought in thought, not in experience. The mystical idea is still an idea: the Kabbalah as Scholem described it was primarily an intellectual discipline, a body of knowledge, a curriculum of study, a system of symbolism, a method of exegesis. Idel wishes to throw open the doors of experience. His work is an extended warning against the dangers of overintellectualizing the understanding of Jewish religion.

In the end, there is a lovely irony about Idel's work. The revisions that he proposes in our understanding of the Kabbalah and in our understanding of Judaism bring to mind the work of . . . Gershom Scholem. In his boldness and his ambition, Idel is truly Scholem's student. Like Scholem, he has set out to free the study of Judaism from the bonds of dogma. And there may be another thing that Idel shares with his teacher. Alongside the question of the nature of the Kabbalah, there is the question of the place of the Kabbalah in Jewish life. Scholem argued that historians should return the Kabbalah from the periphery to the center. But there were other powerful forces contending for the center: rationalist philosophy, represented supremely by the figure of Maimonides, and—most important, perhaps—Talmudism. Many of the great intellectuals of Judaism were neither philosophers nor mystics, but pious students of Jewish law who produced a prodigious tradition of legal theory and legal practice. The importance of mystical experience to the individual mystic, of course, cannot be exaggerated. But how important was it, finally, to the people and its culture?

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Available Light

BY EDWARD HIRSCH

What Light There Is And Other Poems by Eamon Grennan

(North Point Press, 120 pp., $21.95, $10.95 paper)

Reading Eamon Grennan's poems as they have appeared one by one, in *The New Yorker* and elsewhere, I have marveled at a lyric poet who seems amazingly content with daily life, with describing the pleasures and vicissitudes of the quotidian and the domestic, the homespun natural world, the midmorning walk to work and the midafternoon hour spent at the second-story window. His quiet, well-crafted poems are painterly, sensible, shapely; they are eager, unrhetorical, straightforward, melodic. They are never extreme. Grennan sums up his ars poetica in the poem "Raeburn's Skater" when he declares, "I want his delicate balance, his / Sturdy sane domesticated grace." Similarly, in "In the National Gallery, London" he praises the Dutch realists for being "in certain touch / With the world we walk on." His own work is accomplished and steady, grounded in "certain touch."

It is fair to say that the pleasures of such a sturdy, domesticated poetry are not the pleasures of thought, as Wallace Stevens would have it, but of description, of the physical world—the weather in the neighborhood—lovingly observed and rendered. Locale is all. The larger world, the social and political realm, is mostly an absence; history is unattended. Grennan is an Irish poet who lives in the United States and teaches at Vassar, and his poems tend to describe either the landscapes of his native country or the adopted surroundings of quasi-rural, quasi-suburban New York. As a writer he has always seemed to keep one eye on his growing children and the other on the scenery, and he is that rare presence among lyric poets—a singer of the domestic hearth and the unabated middle way who characteristically celebrates "Things of the ordinary morning world."

Reading *What Light There Is And Other Poems* in its entirety, however, I see that much of the dramatic tension in his work comes from the perceptible gap between his longing for solidity and his sense of the true precariousness of things as they are. He is a poetic cross between a naturalist and an ethnomethodologist, a virtuoso of daily life who treats the commonplace as an accomplishment because it is always brushed by danger. As he puts it in "Accidents," there are always those "cold depths / sharking under that thin ice / we've raised our lives on." It takes both savvy and luck to avert the dangers lying in wait not only for us but also for our children—the flimsy patches of ice, the underground mines. In such an accident-prone world the steady, built-

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up solidity of things comes to seem a "merciful fiction." "This is the bottom line," he tells us in "All Souls' Morning": "we / button our habits to the chin and set out, any weather, / walking with death." Raeburn's skater also has to be an "Equilibrist of spirit, solid nerve."

As a poet of dailiness, Grennan tries to fix and nail things down even as the world melts and changes before him. And inside of him. Time offers up what it also takes away. For example, no sooner does he observe a winter Sabbath "Balmy as summer" than he adds, "It won't last." It never does. Thinking of a bird that shattered against the window he announces, "She is out of her element forever / Who was air's high-spirited daughter," and immediately afterward asks, "What guardian wings can I conjure / Over my own young, their migrations?" The answer, the dark limitation of guardianship, is all too apparent—especially for a father who has been separated from his children.

That's one of the things that keeps him awake at night "listening to the sounds the house makes / Whispering its rosary of comforts against the wind." "To build is to dwell," Heidegger said. These poems use the idea of dailiness and domestication, of home light, to fend off the larger losses that are accruing. "Men Roofing" is explicit:

> Here is my image, given,
> of the world
> at peace: men roofing, taking pains to
> keep the weather
> out, simmering in ripe Indian-summer
> light, winter
> on their deadline minds. Briefly they
> stand balanced
> between our common ground and nobody's
> sky, then move
> again to their appointed tasks and
> stations . . .

A book of poems, like a well-built house, has its own "rosary of comforts," its steadying consolations. It, too, becomes a way of securing the roof, of mediating between "our common ground and nobody's sky." Raeburn's skater "lives at a tilt / Between limegreen ice and coral air": "Beyond his ken, out of the picture, / The fixed stars hold him fast."

What Light There Is And Other Poems represents a decade's worth of work—1977 to 1987—and is divided into three sections: "Wildly for Days," "A Single Window," and "What Light There Is." The thirteen intermediate poems of the second form a kind of stylistic bridge between the shorter, somewhat austere lyrics of "Wildly for Days" and the longer, more fully accomplished narrative and meditative poems of the title section. The metaphoric ideas of the early poems are deepened by the more flexible and expansive later ones, which treat the creation of meaning in daily life as a thoroughly constitutive and imaginative activity.

The central emotional sadness of "Wildly for Days" is the death of the poet's father, first treated in the poem "Common Theme." The emotional trauma of "What Light There Is" centers around his own necessary separation from his children. Standing in front of Vermeer's painting *A Girl Asleep* he broods, "I must imagine how my own two children / will grow to know my absence." In the book's final poem, "Conjunctions," he explains:

> I've
> been handing over to Joan the children, as
> happens
> every other week-end: we meet at a gas-
> station and
> deliver our children up—lovingly, to take
> the sting
> out of it—to one another. I'm thinking
> about this,
> about the way my words can't catch it yet
> but
> *about must, and about must go*—trying to be
> true
> to the unavoidable ache in the grain of
> healing,
> trying to boil the big words down to
> size. . . .

Here the two parents, a divorced husband and wife, are trying to manage under painful circumstances. We need to understand, the poem seems to be saying, what appears so evasive and complex, tainted, unarticulated, hurtful, adult. We do the best we can. In light of such recognitions and revelations, one begins to comprehend why this tripartite book follows the arc from its first calm wish—"I would like to let things be"—to its concluding memory of a fox caught in a blaze of headlights "and still running."

Grennan is not a poet of reassurance and stability, but of the mysterious otherness that is ever present in everyday life. He writes with a rare sensuous absorption in the strangeness and the intensity of ordinary things. Often he seems to be studying the world through glass, focusing his attention from a single or solitary window, an observer who is himself unobserved. He gives us still lives and freeze-frames—"Rain inching down the window, / Me looking out at the rain"—startled views, clarifying visions. He writes about watching his daughter waiting for a bus, about "Night Driving Through the Desert": "I know it is over in a flash," he says excitedly, "and after / My heart is beating wildly, wildly for days."

Grennan's sense of the otherness in our midst takes on an exalted air whenever he is talking about animals, especially birds, which come to represent fleeting moments of an incomprehensible transcendence. In "Swifts Over Dublin" he speaks of those "dark sparks of mystery / I must look up to"; in "Lunch-Break on the Edge of Town" he observes five hawks lazily gyring "over the blank, blue page / of haze." These birds—swifts, pigeons, and redwing blackbirds—become emblems of a fluctuating natural world that will not stay put, that swarms outside the window, briefly lit, beyond us. They rest in our vicinity; they rise in time and disappear into the sky; they animate a nameless and radiant vacancy.

Grennan's rich but quiet descriptive language is well suited to his subject matter. He is a pragmatist of the imagination who tends to sneak up on the mysteries by way of the familiar, but the familiar slightly displaced, surprised, "de-familiarized":

> Amazing, how the young man who empties
> our dustbin ascends the truck as it moves
> away from him, rises up like an angel
> in a china-blue check shirt and lilac woolen
> cap, dirty work-gloves, rowanberry
> red bandanna flapping at his throat.

Stylistically, the controlled and somewhat distilled music of his early work has opened up and evened out as he has accommodated the lyricism of his native idiom to the prosier free verse rhythms of contemporary American poetry. It is as if Yeats at midcareer had not only been edited by Pound but also influenced by Williams. Grennan's supple long lines and roomy stanzas have given him license not only to think further but also to develop the figuration in his poems, to ground his symbols and extend his pace and reach, modulating song into meditation, incorporating the simple imagistic detail into more fully realized description.

This is another way of saying that an emblematic lyrical mode has taken on more associative and discursive values. The simile of the young man as an angel in "Wing Road," for example, is not merely posited—it is also developed and extended, almost in the manner of a metaphysical conceit. So too the image of workers in "Men Roofing" is considered, defined, explicated. In this way the lyrics start to tease out their implications, unpacking their meanings. Like the roofers, these poems "ply" and "intercede." They trace and unmine what one names "the dark heart of their mystery" and the other calls "the unlikely radiance."

The poem "For the Record" is both characteristic and explicit, a naturalistic

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parable. It is in just such observations that a poetic inheres:

After six unsparing days of storm
A grey still day without rain.
Nothing spectacular, no exploding
Stars off the lake, no precious
Glitter of soaked grass, no triumph
In bannering branches, just branches
Taking the air as if it belonged
To them, the faint sleepy chink-
Chink of the robin in the next field,
And everything in its place.
But nothing carnival or sabbatical,
Only a sort of steady domestic peace
Secures all animations in the garden,
Giving everything its due. No fuss,
No unexpected flares, no amazing
Grace in the play and swift trans-
Figurings of light off water. Only
Cloud, seamless still air, this hush.
So, after six days of storm, record
A perfectly ordinary day at last—
Dry, a little on the cool side.

With what an unspectacular, sacramental, and clear-eyed joy the poet records and welcomes the week's return to normalcy.

Eamon Grennan's poetic project is deceptively modest. His well-considered style is a way of hedging against a prophecy of losses by a lucid attentiveness to the fullness of "a perfectly ordinary day at last," to whatever light there is, here and now, in this world. Such dailiness has its curative effects. The light that radiates from his work is understated, intricate, luminous, consoling.

EDWARD HIRSCH is the author most recently of *The Night Parade* (Knopf).

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

useless simply because of the excessive publicity associated with one report.

JOHN C. CRABBE
Portland, Oregon

Rather fight than quit

To the editors:

Michael Kinsley (TRB, "Smokenders," May 14) failed to touch upon the most disquieting aspect of recent changes in attitudes toward smoking: the total absence of civility and restraint in discussions about smoking. Smokers are routinely described as stupid, weak, and a threat to society's well-being, but they do nowhere near as much harm as many other groups, such as drunk drivers or drug addicts.

Why has America chosen to gang up on smokers when it rarely and certainly only transiently displays such vehemence for anything else? Maybe it's because smokers don't really fight back. In other words, it's a kind of bullying; it's a classic case of evading a fight with some of your own shortcomings by attacking someone you know you can lick.

ROBERT MILCH
Stony Brook, New York

Card tricks

To the editors:

The implications of Jagdish Bhagwati's position on immigration ("Behind the Green Card," May 14) are profoundly troubling. The core of his argument is that since we have been unable to stop illegal immigration, and since it's "ethically offensive" to do so, we should therefore treat illegal aliens as we do citizens.

The inevitable consequence of such a policy would be an acceleration of illegal immigration and population growth. Based on current rates of illegal immigration, some demographers project the U.S. population to reach 400 million in the second half of the next century. Bhagwati's policy could easily increase that to 500 million or more. The large majority of these immigrants would have little education, few skills, and virtually no experience with democratic institutions. They would inevitably swell an underclass whose indices of poverty, infant mortality, crime, and school dropout are already skewed by illegal immigrants.

LAWRENCE E. HARRISON
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Lean cuisine

To the editors:

As Martin Peretz (Jerusalem Diarist, "Visionaries & Fantasists," May 14) correctly recalls, the custom of reclining to the left at the Passover seder symbolizes freedom. This is based on Roman practice, where free men ate while reclining on couches, each with his own table. In his comprehensive *Shulhan Arukh* code of Jewish law, Rabbi Joseph Daro instructs one to sit reclining "by way of freedom."

The requirement of leaning to the left, as opposed to the right, is based on medical considerations, according to the *Misha Brura*, the authoritative commentary on the *Shulhan Arukh* authored by Rabbi Israel Meir haKohen. He explains that the esophagus is on the right side, and leaning in that direction allows food in the windpipe, leading to danger of choking. For this reason, even a left-handed person must sacrifice convenience for safety at the Seder and recline to the left. This is the religious explanation; any political implications are left for you to interpret.

SHAI FRANKLIN
Washington, D.C.

TRB *continued from page 4*

Bud McFarlane is still here as a "consultant." Years ago, shortly after *Washington Post* reporter Janet Cooke was exposed as a fraud and lost her Pulitzer Prize, I heard a fellow journalist express her impassioned affront at having run into Cooke at the local Safeway. A clot of colleagues agreed that the miscreant's very presence in town was an outrage. Apparently the notion was that anyone so deeply disgraced should be physically banished as well. This struck me at the time as a parochial attitude that you wouldn't find in, say, New York. And maybe you don't find it here now either.

But isn't it time for everyone to give up this tiresome conceit that there's something immoral about living and working in Washington? The editors of *The Wall Street Journal* were at it again the other day, using a marketing study showing that Washingtonians prefer tennis and gourmet cooking to hunting and "tinker[ing] with the Chevy" as an occasion to sneer about "an elite culture, a sort of American royal court divorced from the common taste." Maybe I'm going out on a limb here, but how much bowling, Bible-reading, and tabaccy-chawing do you suppose goes on around the World Financial Center, Battery Park City, Manhattan—home of *The Wall Street Journal*?

The draw of provincials to the capital city, and their self-reinvention as metropolitan sophisticates, is a constant in all nations. Unlike, say, Britain and France, the United States has different capitals for government and business, with cultural leadership split between the business capital and a third city, L.A. That impoverishes life in Washington, but it's probably good for the country. (In the invention of West Germany, capital functions were spread among several cities, which worked very well for German democracy. But that experiment is probably ending with reunification.)

In terms of cultural isolation, New York is far worse off than Washington. The texture of life in Washington—how you get to work, how you do your laundry, what you do on weekends—is more or less like the texture of middle-class life in the rest of the country. In New York these day-to-day details are completely different.

Unlike New York and Los Angeles, Washington at least worries about what the rest of the country is thinking, and tortures itself about being out of touch. And Washington—like New York and Los Angeles, but unlike other places in America—is nourished by a constant stream of new arrivals from everywhere else in the country. If most of them don't go back, is that so awful?

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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VERSAILLES DIARIST

Peace through pâté

THE COLD WAR IS ENDING WITHout a peace conference, but there was lunch at Versailles anyway. The victors of the cold war—the North Atlantic Assembly, composed of parliamentarians from the member countries of NATO—had just finished debating "The Future of European Security," a future in which the exact purpose of the conquering alliance is itself unclear. As the debate droned on, the bourgeois triumphalists, practiced in the arts of parliamentary maneuver, retreated in overwhelming numbers to the equivalent of the cloakroom, where chocolate croissants were available.

AFTER SEVERAL DOZEN VOTES ON several dozen amendments to the meaningless, symbolic draft resolution, the throng of nearly one thousand swiftly shook hands with Laurent Fabius, president of the French National Assembly, and grabbed chairs in the Gallery of Battles, streaming with overhead light that illuminated huge paintings of French military prowess from Charlemagne to Napoleon. Strategically positioned amid the marble busts of French nobility were white-coated officers of the catering service, proudly wearing their tall, starched chef hats. It was here that Western unity was cemented with pâté and lubricated with dry Muscadet of Chateau La Chataigneraie vintage.

A WEEK EARLIER I HAD BEEN IN Madrid. I couldn't find a shred of evidence there that Francisco Franco ever existed. Well, one. Picasso's *Guernica*, returned from its exile in New York's Museum of Modern Art, is now housed in a small building near the Prado, behind a thick bulletproof glass shield to deter Falangist performance artists who might wish to deface it. Most of those gazing at the picture, however, belonged to Japanese tour groups, one of the ubiquitous sights of Europe. Standing before the terrified horse and the Madonna cradling her dead baby, the Japanese endlessly posed for pictures. The sound of clicking cameras was like the sound of gunfire. A guard, an older man who had spent most of his life under Franco, is devoting his remaining days to shooing the Japanese away from the shield.

OUTSIDE, ONE CAN SPOT A FEW grizzled old men, who probably remember everything, slowly walking past fashionable boutiques. There is no fascism and no communism. What do they now think about the Spanish Civil War? The rest of Spain thinks about Pedro Almodóvar's latest film, and why the culturally conservative Americans have such a thing as an X rating for it. One of Spain's best and brightest, a woman who had worked in a high-level job in the Ministry of Defense and who now develops policy for the whole Cabinet, was asked for her impression of contemporary America. Censorship, she said; cultural conservatism. Her view was not an aberration. Throughout the leadership classes of Europe, America's reputation has been badly tarnished by the crusades of right-wing primitives. With the security question receding, the cultural factor may be more salient than anyone in the philistine Bush administration grasps. In Europe cultural conservatism is part of the discredited past; in some places, including Central Europe, this is a very recent, very miserable past. How well can America stand for the new when it insists, through repressive gestures, on sustaining the old? With the demise of the cold war, American conservatism may turn out to be mainly a form of cultural isolationism.

HOW RADICALLY EUROPE IS BEING transformed can perhaps be best gauged from sleepy Bonn, an Albany on the Rhine, aroused to a frenetic state worthy of one of Beethoven's unending codas. In a nondescript conference room, officers of the German General Staff, an organization that has not been peripheral in the century of total war, delivered a briefing. On the walls of the briefing room were only two pictures—one of a young man, another of an old man, but both of the same man: von Moltke, the founder of the General Staff. As a rule, the General Staff is not known for fanciful thinking. It was one of their leaders, in fact, who developed the concept of *realpolitik*. Yet each statement made that afternoon, in an utterly matter-of-fact tone, was more radical than the last. "The Warsaw Pact is gone," said one officer with many stars on his shoulders. "There will be no forward defense of the German border," said another. "We have had a revolution. Forget what you learned yesterday," said a general with even more stars. "I'm looking at a world where the Soviets are gone."

THE IMMINENCE OF SUCH A WORLD is what is really behind the confusion of the Soviets in the conventional arms talks. If there is any inevitability left in history, it is that the Soviet Union will soon be out of Europe. The "common European home" will be created without the presence of the Red Army, the source of Soviet influence for two generations. But the change is even more profound: Russia is nearing its lowest ebb as a Great Power in two centuries. The Red Army, a member of the German General Staff revealed, is already beginning to disintegrate inside East Germany. The more the Soviet soldiers see the fruits of German unification, the more the goods fill the stores, the greater the discontent. Whole neighborhoods have been cordoned off by the Red Army to hunt down deserters. The Soviets can stay and collapse, or leave.

MOST OF THE DISCUSSIONS OF POtential German power so far have been arithmetic, adding the populations and economies of the two Germanys and drawing a bottom line. If any other factor is thrown in the computation it is that the East Germans must have an ingrained Communist lethargy. All that is neglected in this calculation is national character. "We are not 61 million people in central Africa," a minister of the West German government told me. "We are 61 million Germans in Central Europe." Germany, soon to be 80 million, is now on the eve of realizing its historic goal of supremacy in Europe under the banner of NATO. "NATO has a great future. We praise NATO every day," a German general told me, betraying the slightest hint of irony in his disciplined enthusiasm. Germany has simply wasted a century.

FREELY RAISING THEIR GLASSES at Versailles to the victory of the Allies were members of the East German parliament, representing a country that will survive no longer than did the Republic of Texas. They were poorly prepared for the struggle of the Concert of Nations around the buffet table. They also had no idea how to replenish their wine supply. A West German diplomat, a veteran of many NATO campaigns, observed their plight. Quietly and deftly, he accumulated a veritable arsenal of Muscadet and dropped it on the Easties. "After the buffet," he said, "they understand Western unity."

AROUND THE CORNER FROM THE feast was the Hall of Mirrors, a haunted chamber of reflected imagery, where an American president, Woodrow Wilson, once entered as a messiah to make the world anew. His vision, reformed by his assistant secretary of the Navy, Franklin Roosevelt, is closer to reality now than it was in 1919 or 1945. But there is no commanding American president. There are simply parliamentarians playing tourists in the palace of the French kings. The Hall of Mirrors is empty.

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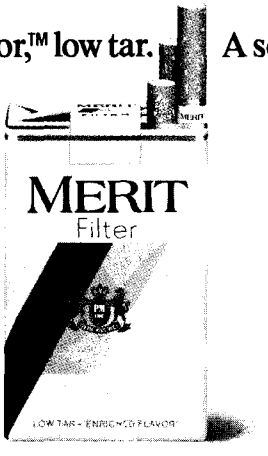

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